

MARVEL®



©1984 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
TM

60¢
244
JUNE
© 02458

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS™

THE WRAITHS WALK AMONG US!



THE WATERS OF FLORIDA'S BANANA RIVER FROTH AND CHURN THIS MORNING IN THE WAKE OF THE BIG PLEASURE BOAT...

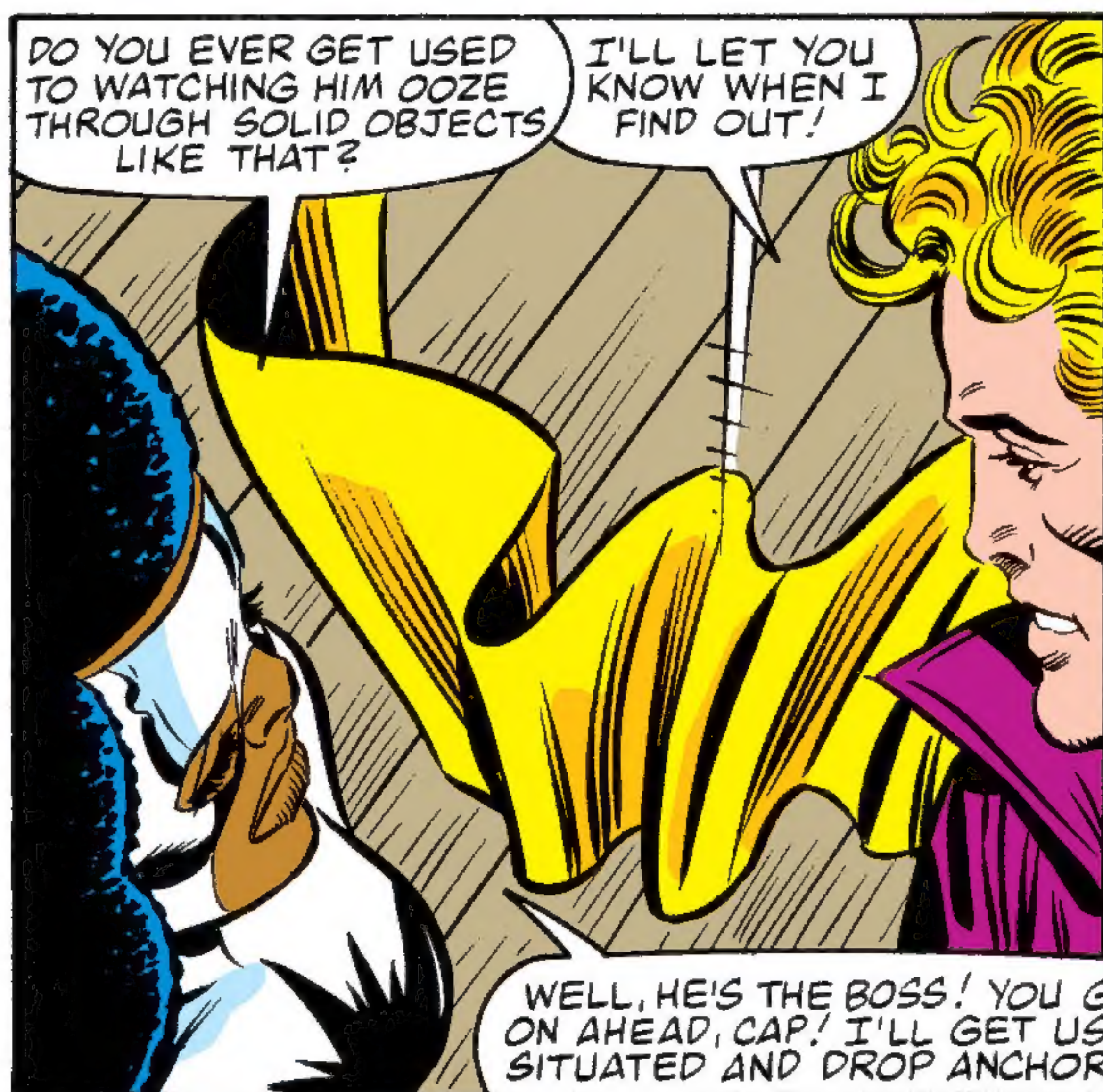
...AND THE MAN AT THE WHEEL KEEPS CASTING AN INQUIRING EYE BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER, TOWARDS THE VEHICLE ASSEMBLY BUILDING OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER.

HE DOESN'T REALLY NOTICE THE BALL OF ENERGY THAT SHOOTS DOWN OUT OF THE SKIES... NOT UNTIL IT IS ALMOST ON TOP OF HIM!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS...

"AND THE
ROCKET'S
RED GLARE!"

ROGER STERN AL MILGROM & CARMINE INFANTINO JOE SINNOTT JIM NOVAK CHRISTIE SCHEELE MARK GRUENWALD JIM SHOOTER
WRITER PENCILERS INKER LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR EDITOR IN CHIEF



THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN QUICKLY WITH THE AVENGERS, BUT LATELY IT ALMOST SEEMS LIKE WE'VE BEEN MARCHING AT TRIPLE-TIME!

WE HADN'T BEEN BACK FROM OUR CONFRONTATION WITH THAT... THAT BEYONDER MORE THAN A FEW HOURS, WHEN THE WASP STEPPED DOWN AS CHAIRWOMAN IN FAVOR OF THE VISION! * AND NOW...

STEVEN ROGERS!

*SEE LAST ISSUE AND THE SECRET WARS LIMITED SERIES.

OH, HI, JAN!

IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU CAME DOWN OFF THAT SILLY OLD POOPDECK AND JOINED US! ARE YOU WEARING A FULL COSTUME UNDER THOSE DECK CLOTHES? TAKE THEM OFF RIGHT NOW!

BETTER DO AS SHE SAYS, STEVE! IT'S MUCH TOO WARM FOR TWO LAYERS TODAY-- ESPECIALLY WITH WHAT YOU WEAR!

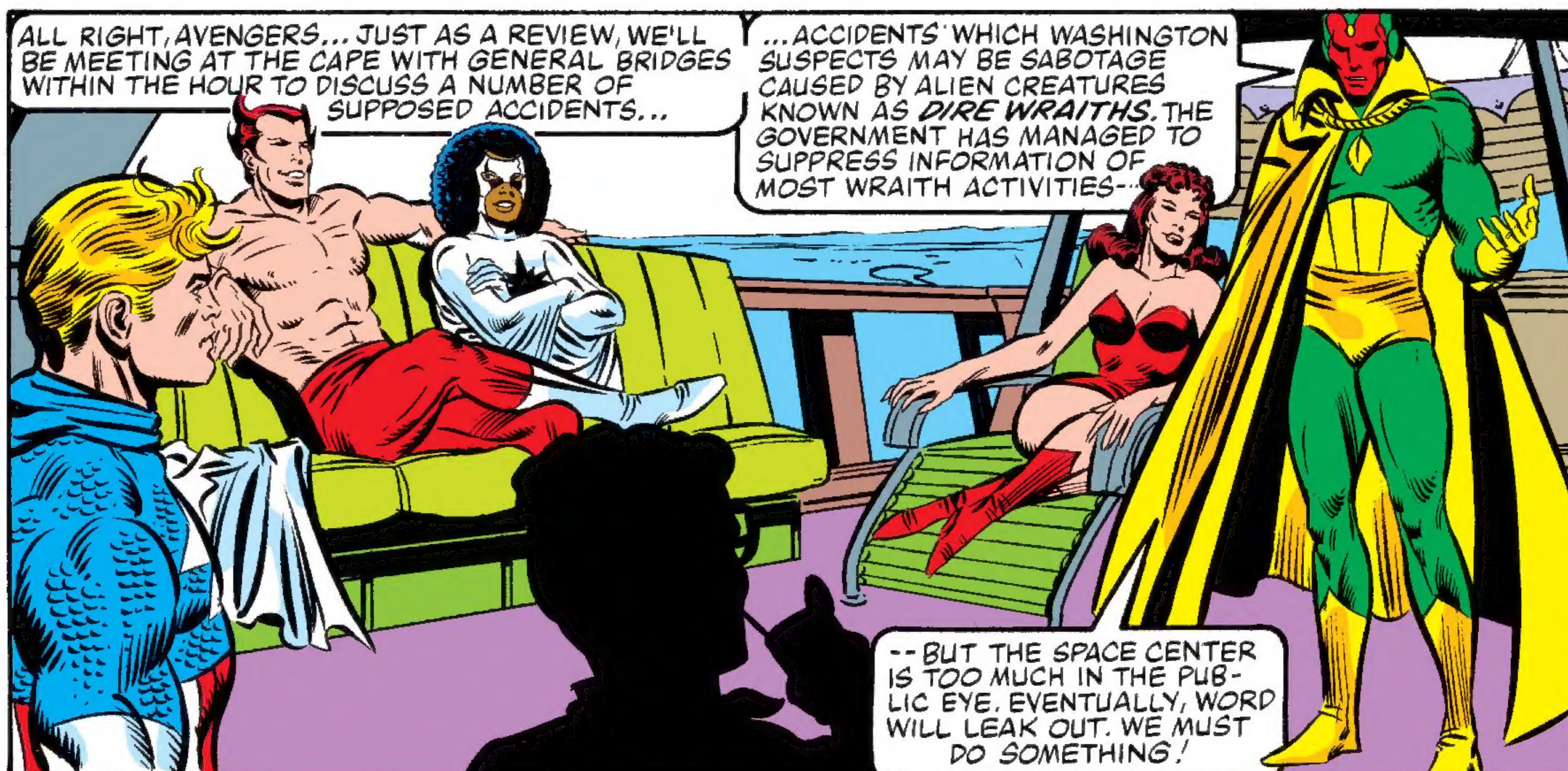
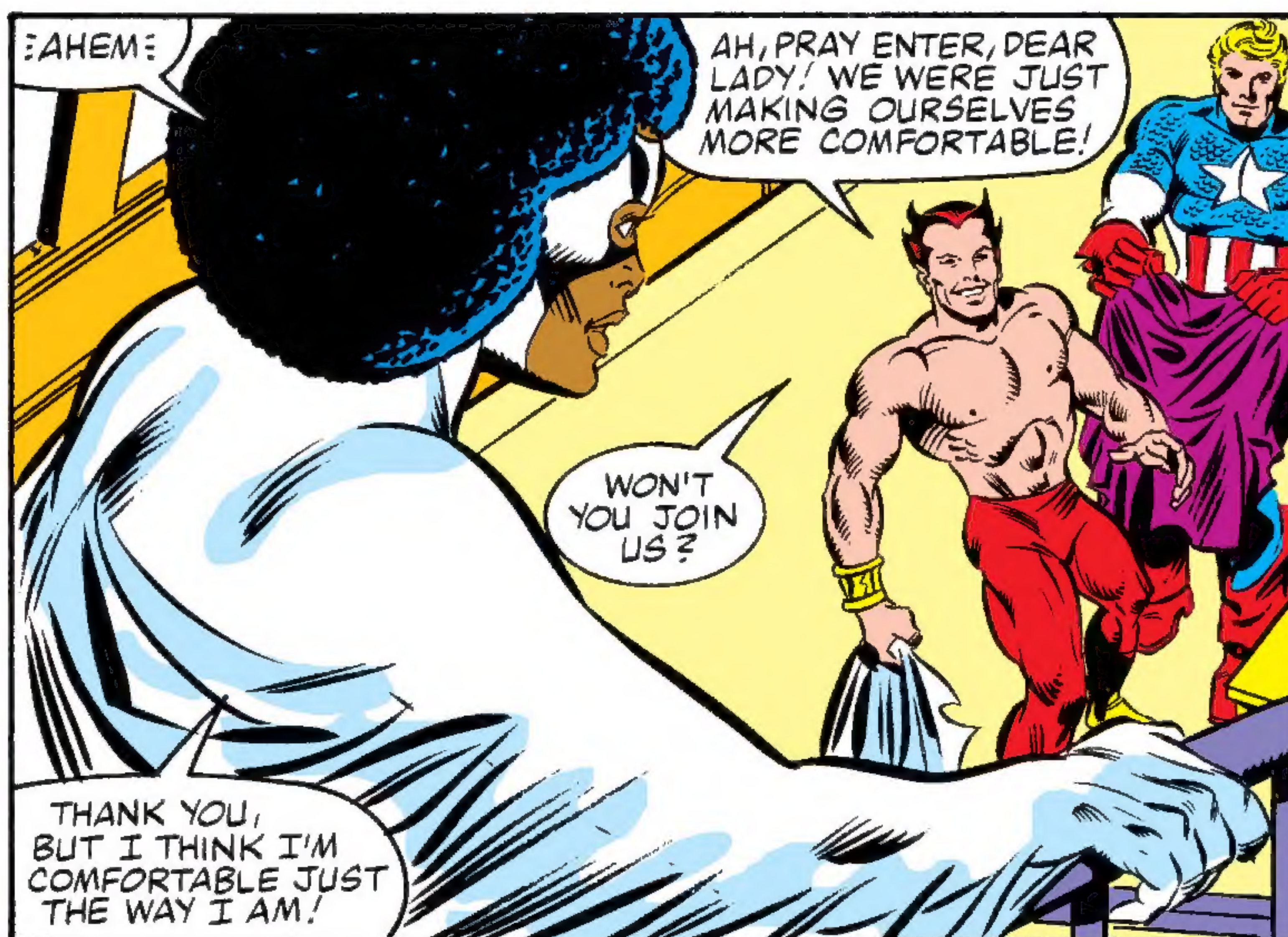
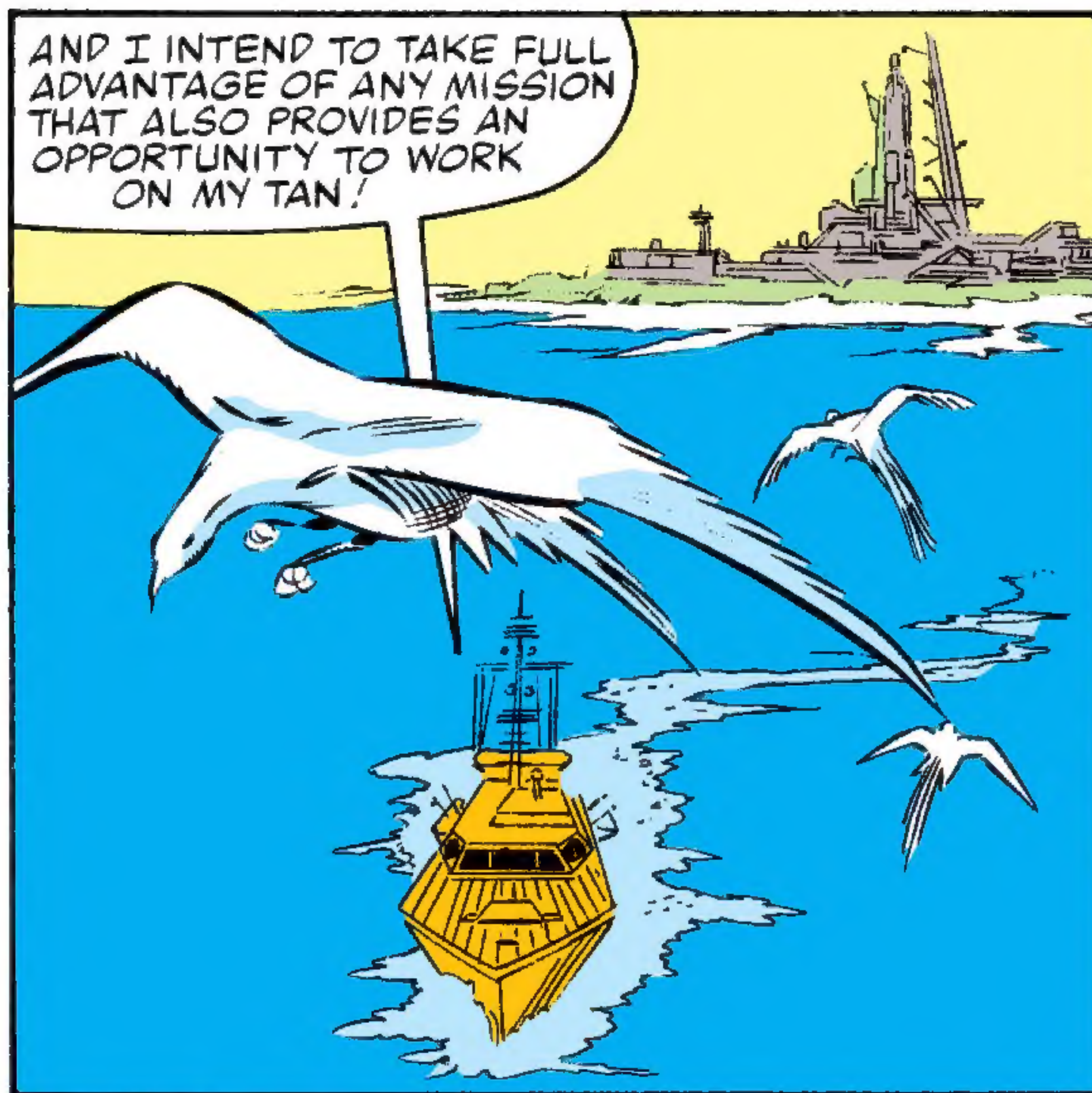
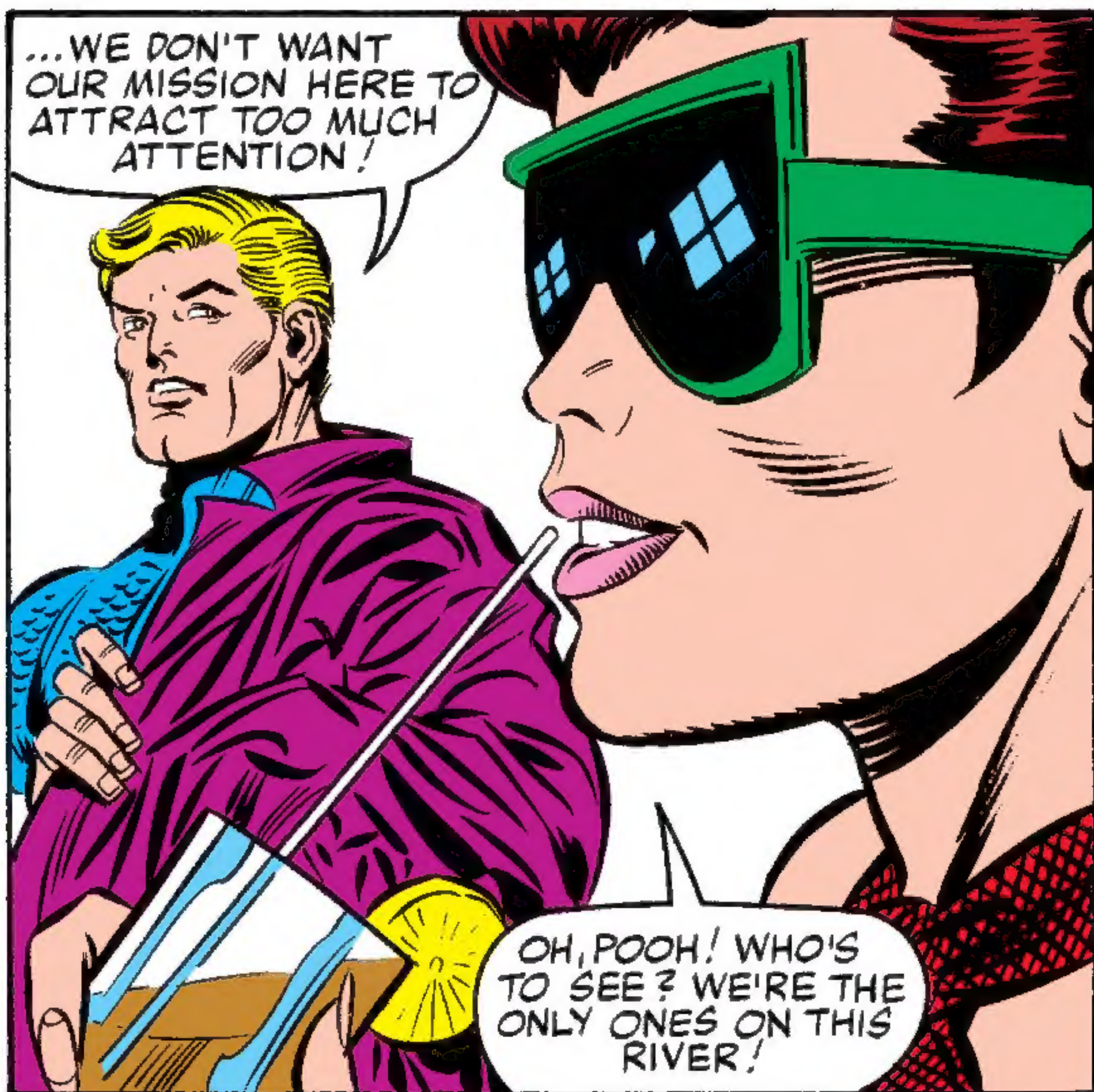
DOESN'T THAT CHAIN MAIL GET AWFULLY HOT?

ONE GETS USED TO IT, WANDA.

I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND THE WILLINGNESS OF YOU TERRANS TO ENDURE CONTINUAL DISCOMFORT IN THE NAME OF SECRECY!

YES, BUT DOESN'T HE ENDURE IT WELL?

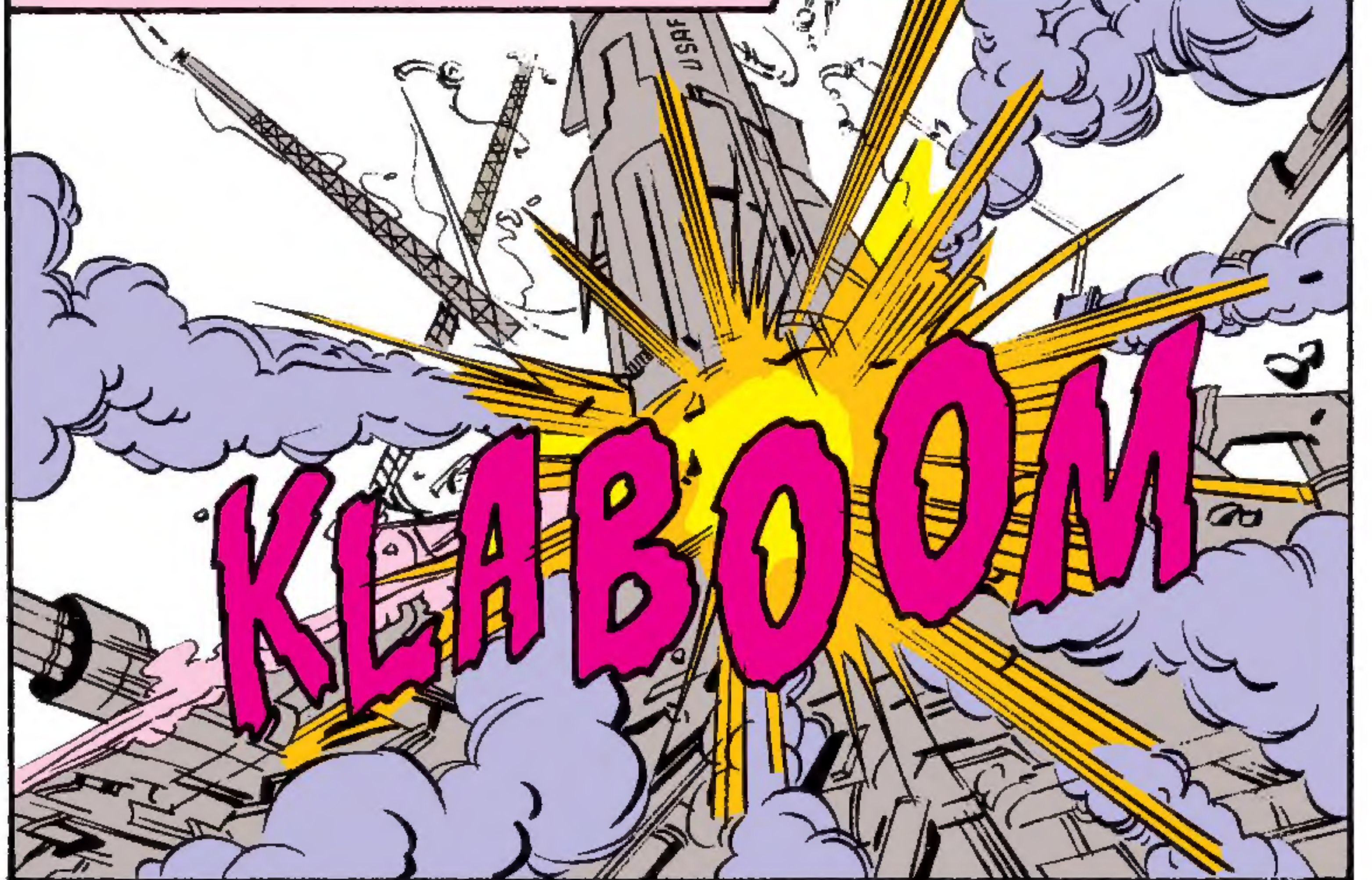
THE DECK OUTFIT SEEMED A SMALL ENOUGH SACRIFICE, STARFOX...



YOU'RE RIGHT ON THAT COUNT, VISION! IF AN ALIEN LIFE-FORM ATTACKED THE SPACE-CENTER, THERE COULD BE WORLDWIDE PANIC!



BUT THOSE WORDS ARE BARELY OUT OF CAPTAIN AMERICA'S MOUTH WHEN, SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS AWAY...

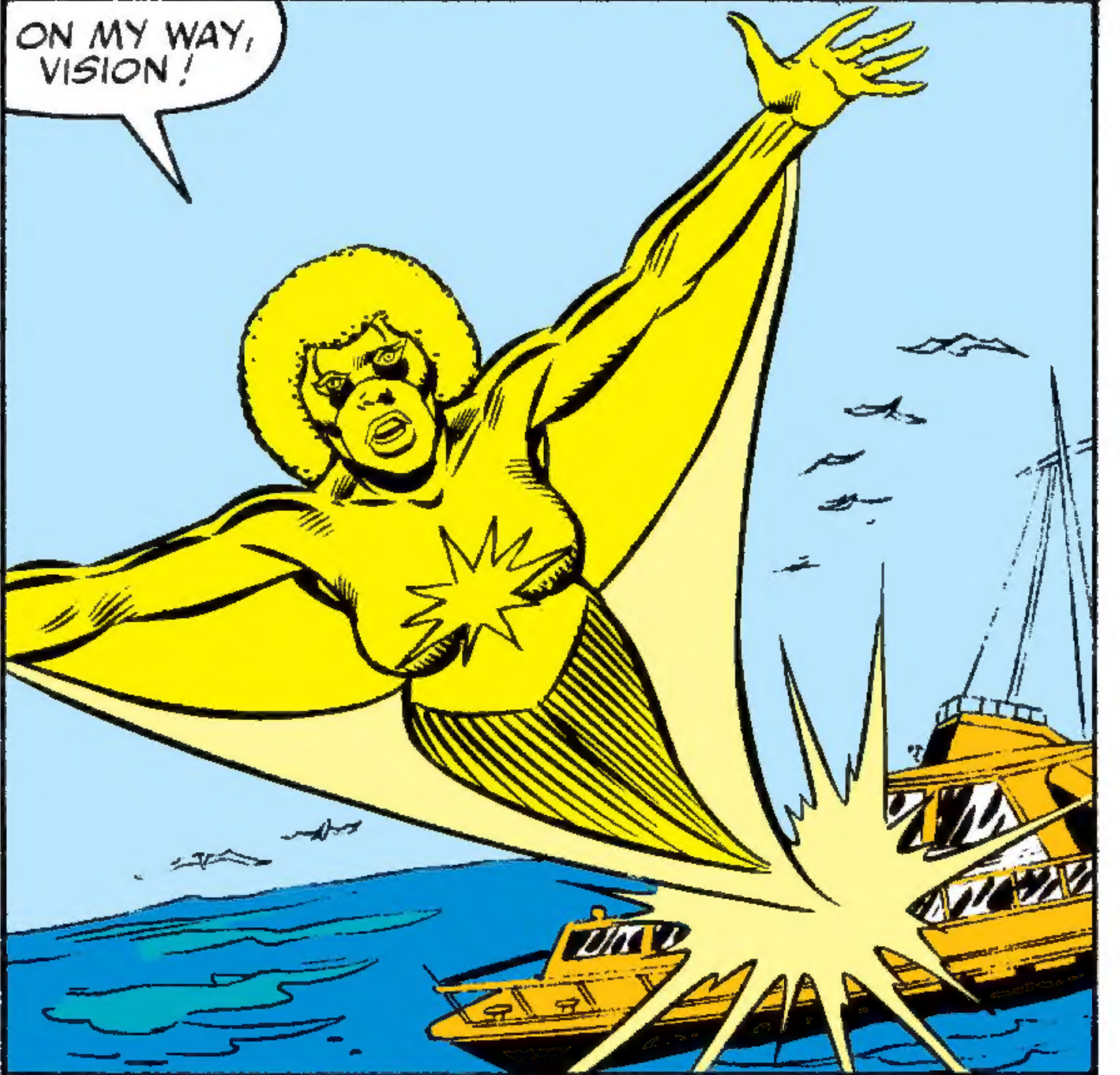


BLAZES! THAT TEST PAD--!

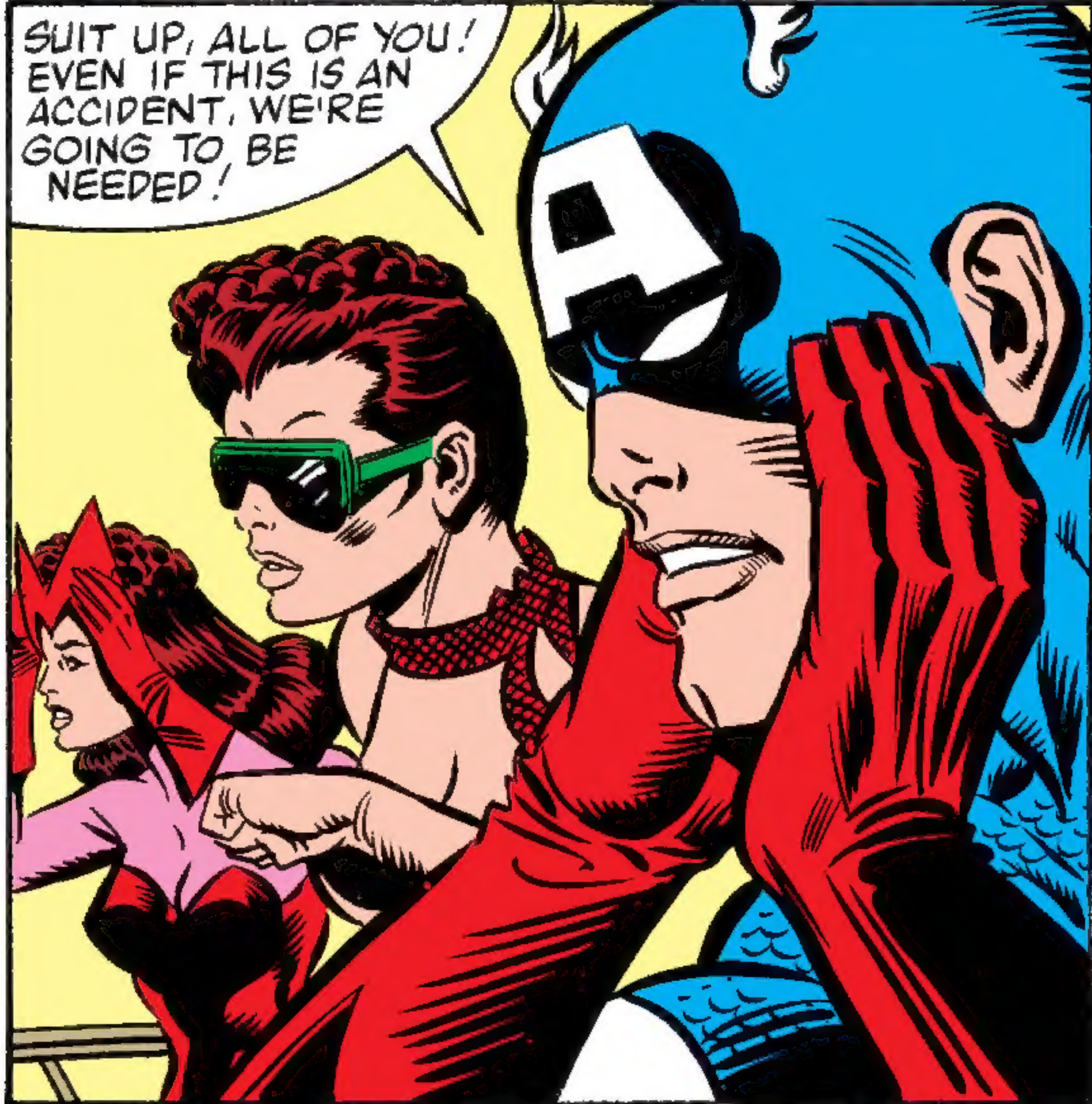


IT WOULD APPEAR WE'VE ARRIVED NONE TOO SOON! CAPTAIN MARVEL--?

ON MY WAY, VISION!



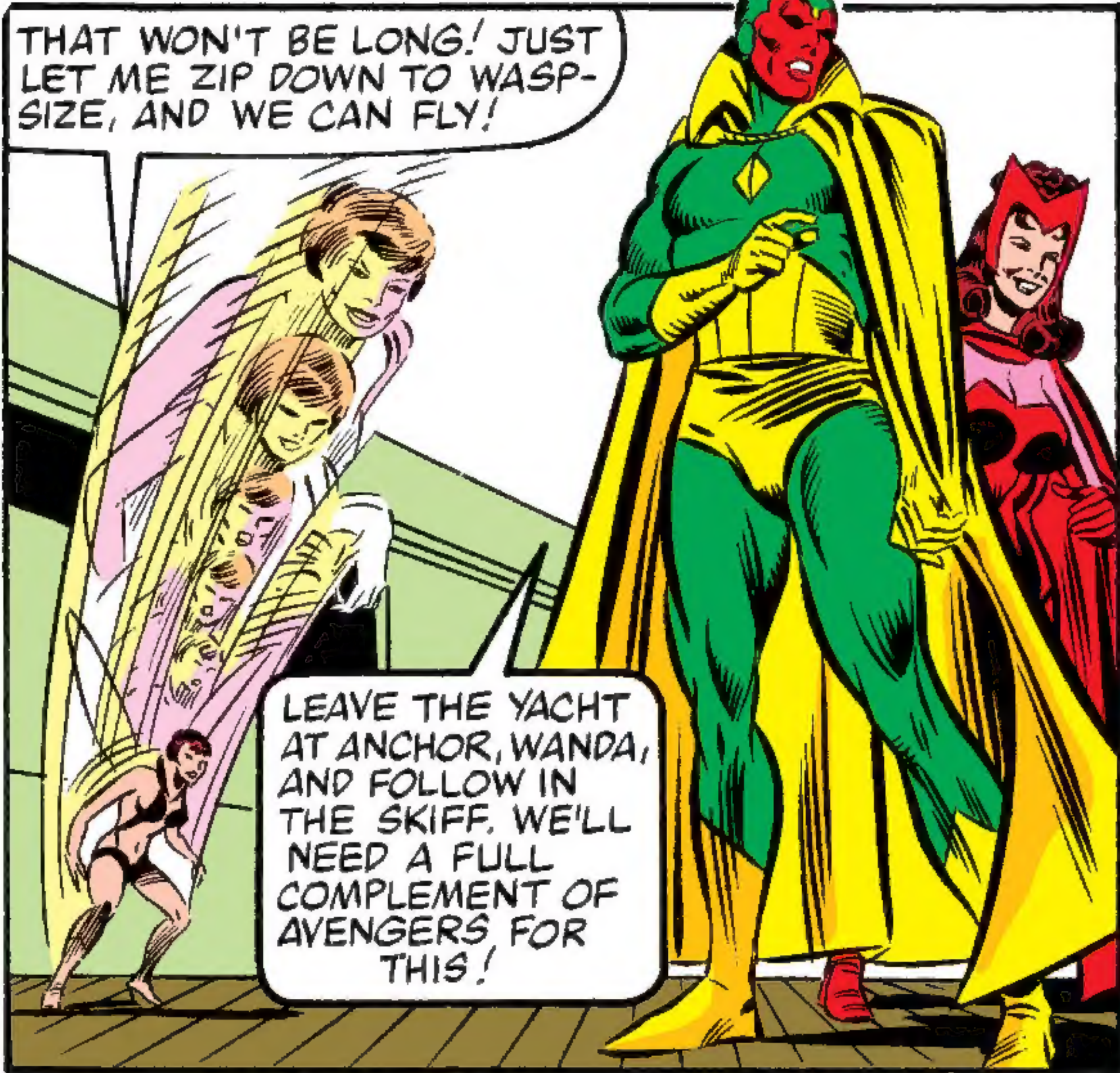
SUIT UP, ALL OF YOU! EVEN IF THIS IS AN ACCIDENT, WE'RE GOING TO BE NEEDED!



YOU'LL NEED SOME FAST TRANSPORTATION, CAP... ALLOW ME!

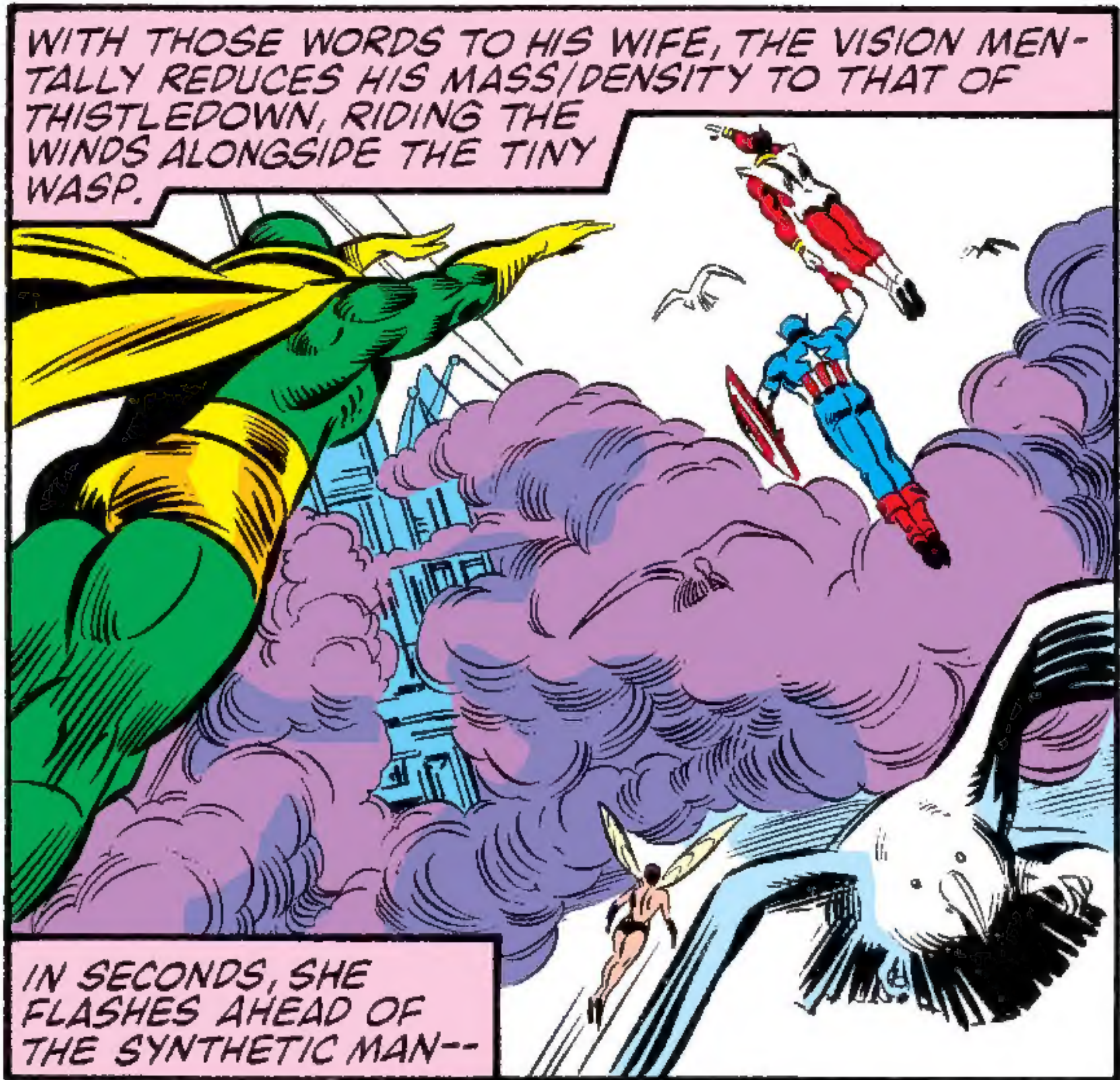


THE REST OF US WILL JOIN YOU AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN!



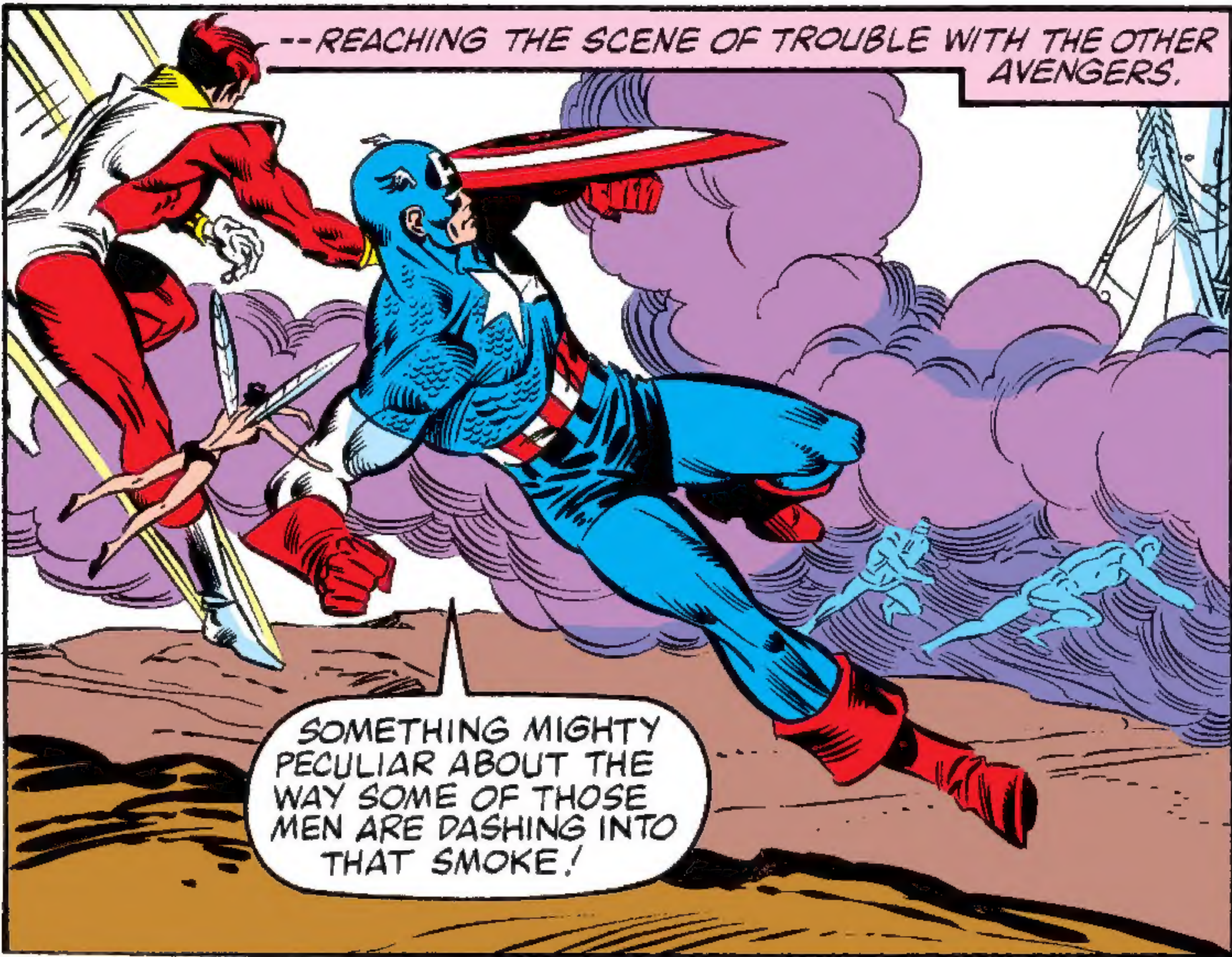
THAT WON'T BE LONG! JUST LET ME ZIP DOWN TO WASP-SIZE, AND WE CAN FLY!

LEAVE THE YACHT AT ANCHOR, WANDA, AND FOLLOW IN THE SKIFF. WE'LL NEED A FULL COMPLEMENT OF AVENGERS FOR THIS!



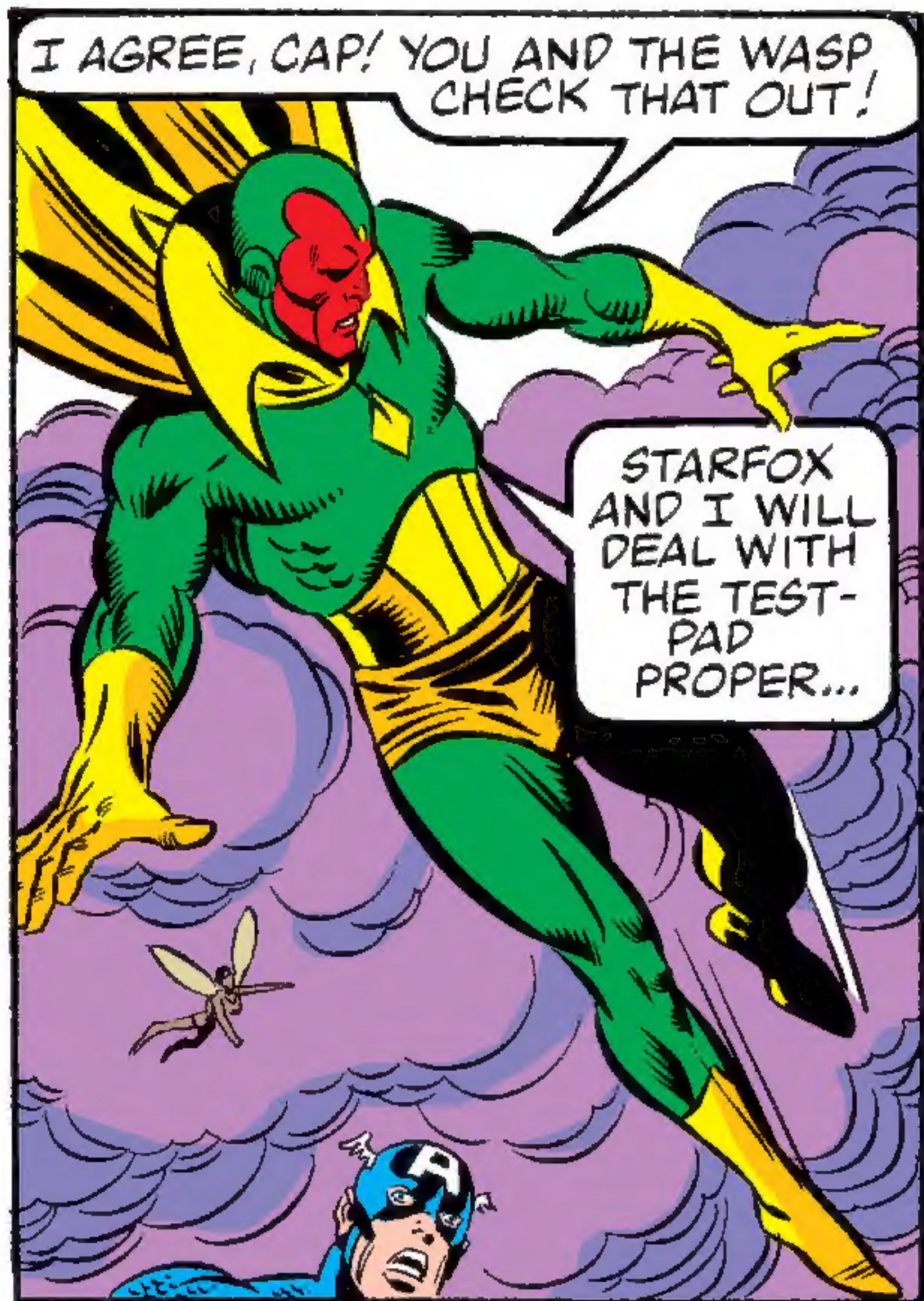
WITH THOSE WORDS TO HIS WIFE, THE VISION MENTALLY REDUCES HIS MASS/DENSITY TO THAT OF THISTLEDOWN, RIDING THE WINDS ALONGSIDE THE TINY WASP.

IN SECONDS, SHE FLASHES AHEAD OF THE SYNTHETIC MAN--



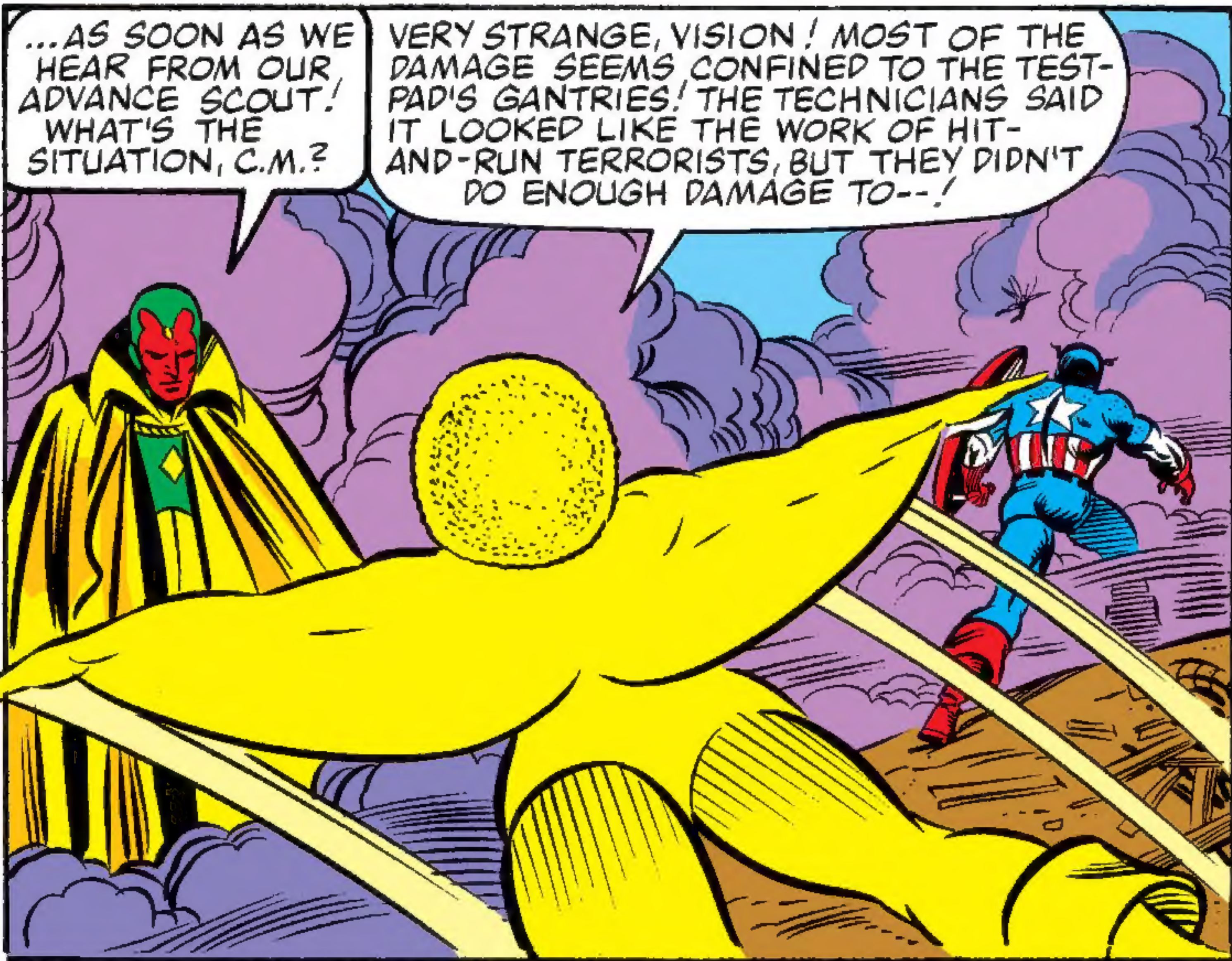
--REACHING THE SCENE OF TROUBLE WITH THE OTHER AVENGERS.

SOMETHING MIGHTY PECULIAR ABOUT THE WAY SOME OF THOSE MEN ARE DASHING INTO THAT SMOKE!



I AGREE, CAP! YOU AND THE WASP CHECK THAT OUT!

STARFOX AND I WILL DEAL WITH THE TEST-PAD PROPER...



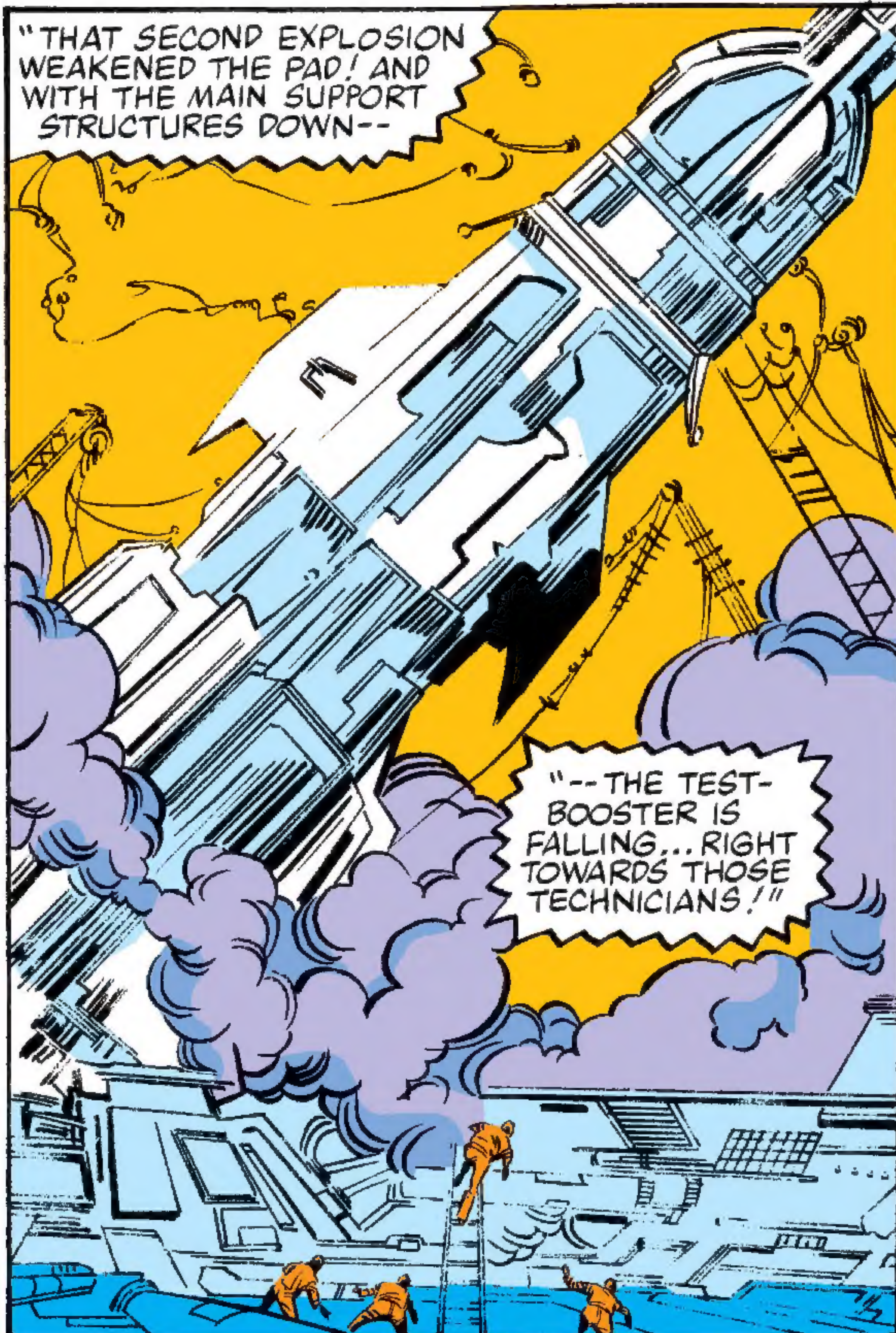
...AS SOON AS WE HEAR FROM OUR ADVANCE SCOUT! WHAT'S THE SITUATION, C.M.?

VERY STRANGE, VISION! MOST OF THE DAMAGE SEEMS CONFINED TO THE TEST-PAD'S GANTRIES! THE TECHNICIANS SAID IT LOOKED LIKE THE WORK OF HIT-AND-RUN TERRORISTS, BUT THEY DIDN'T DO ENOUGH DAMAGE TO--!



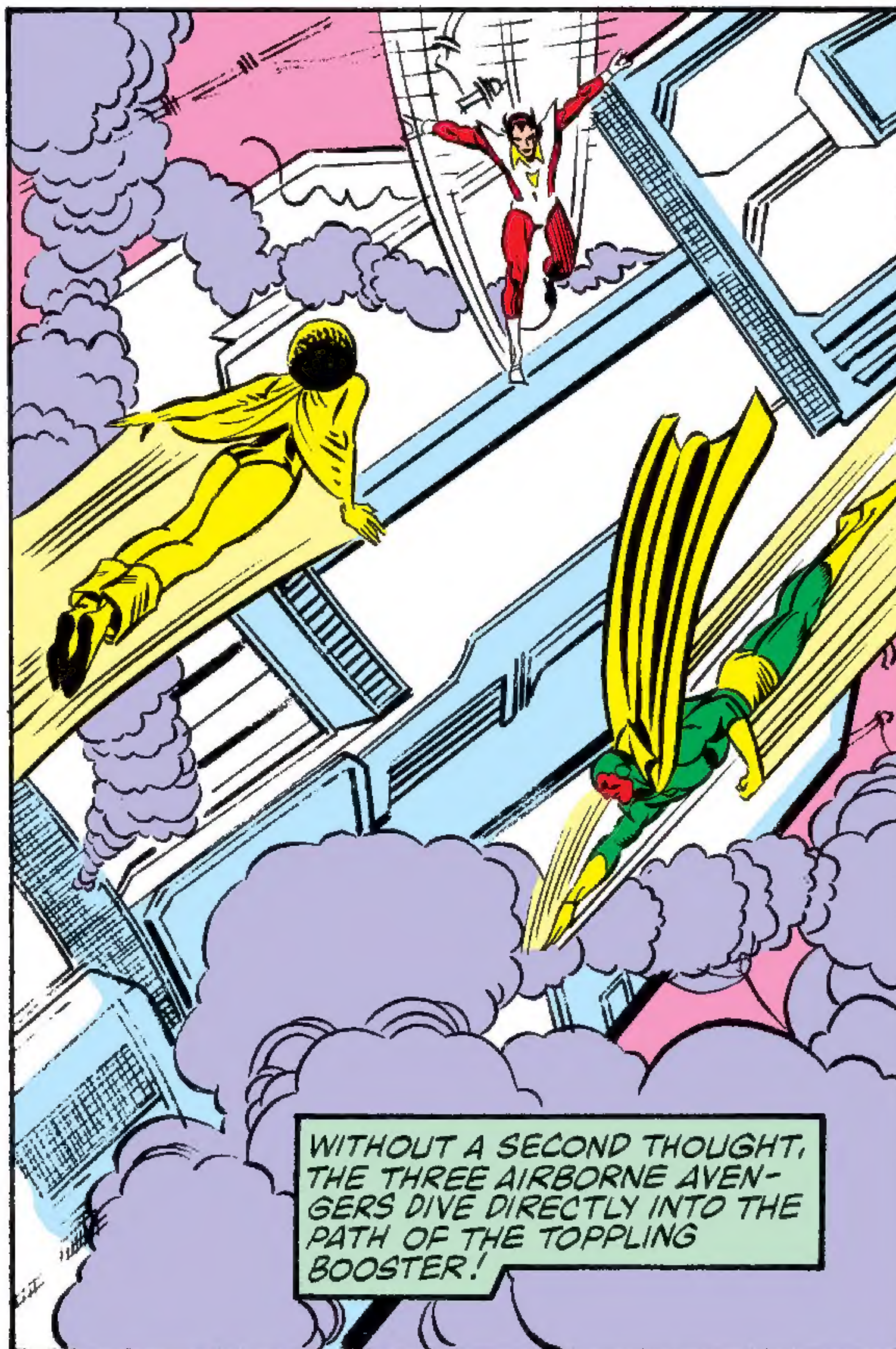
KROOM

OMIGOD!



"THAT SECOND EXPLOSION WEAKENED THE PAD! AND WITH THE MAIN SUPPORT STRUCTURES DOWN--

"--THE TEST-BOOSTER IS FALLING... RIGHT TOWARDS THOSE TECHNICIANS!"

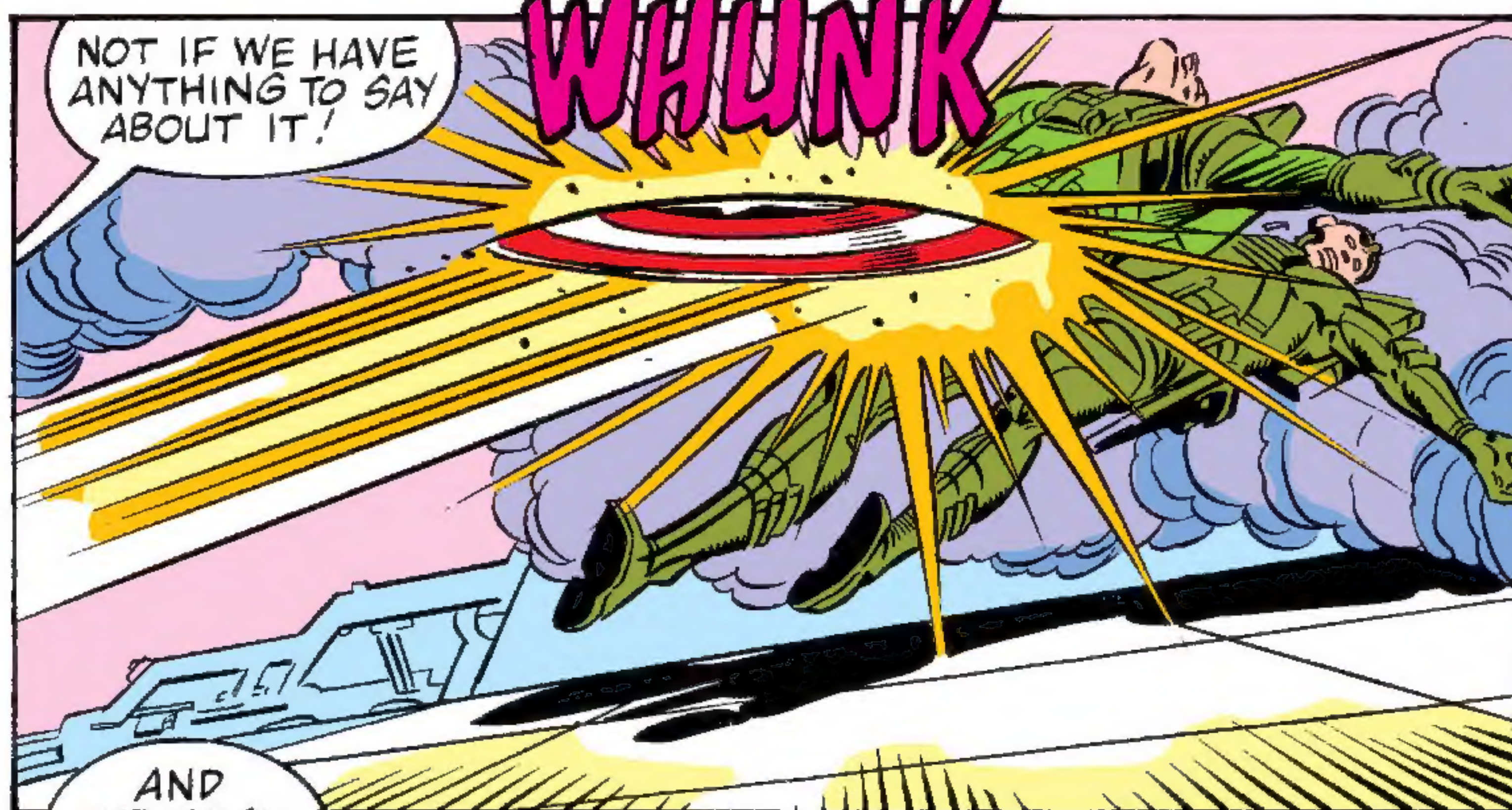


WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT, THE THREE AIRBORNE AVENGERS DIVE DIRECTLY INTO THE PATH OF THE TOPPLING BOOSTER!



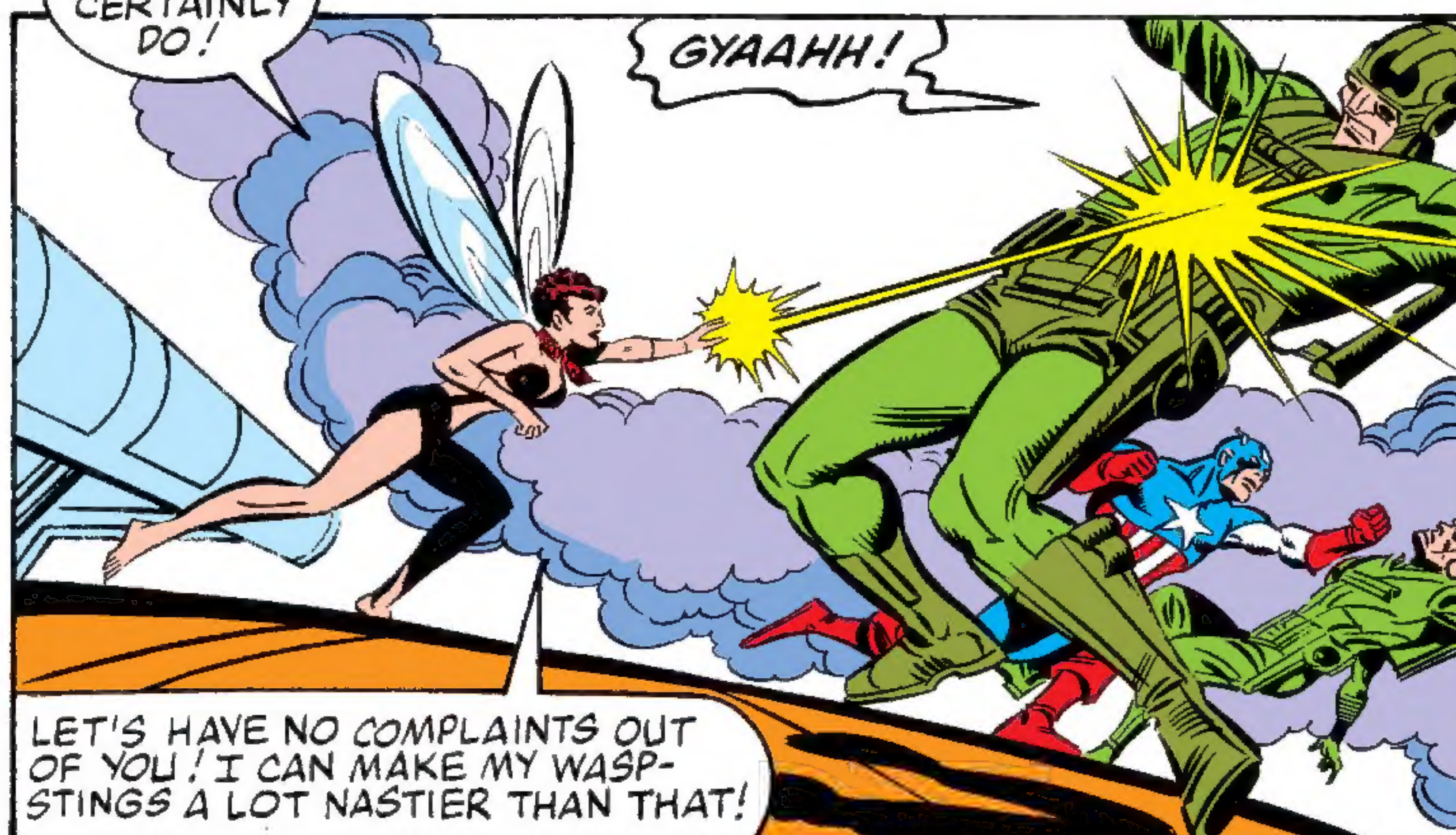
WHILE, ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE PAD...

LOOKIN' GOOD, ROCKEETEERS! A COUPLE MORE MINI-MISSILES, AND THIS LAUNCH STAND WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST!



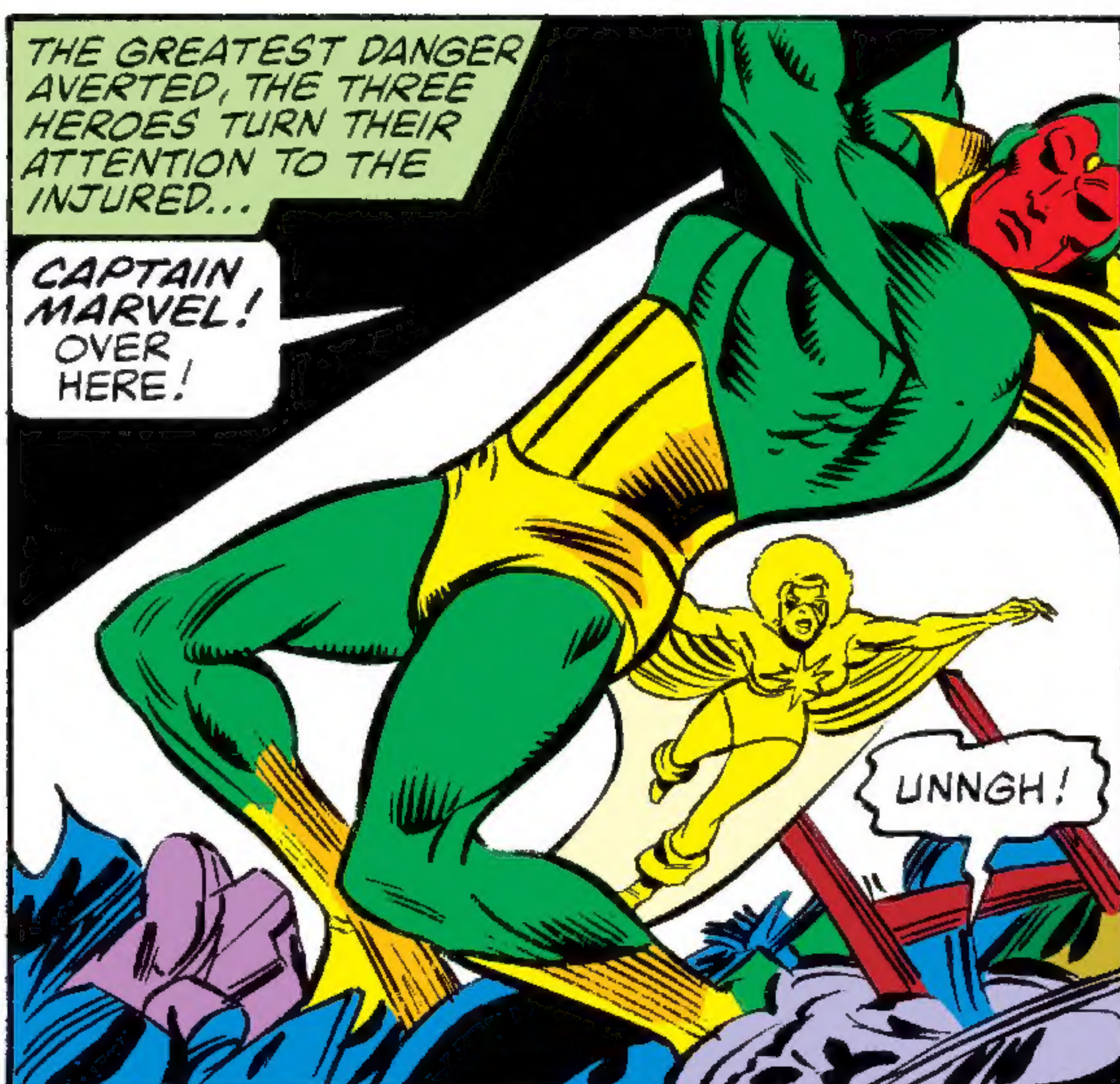
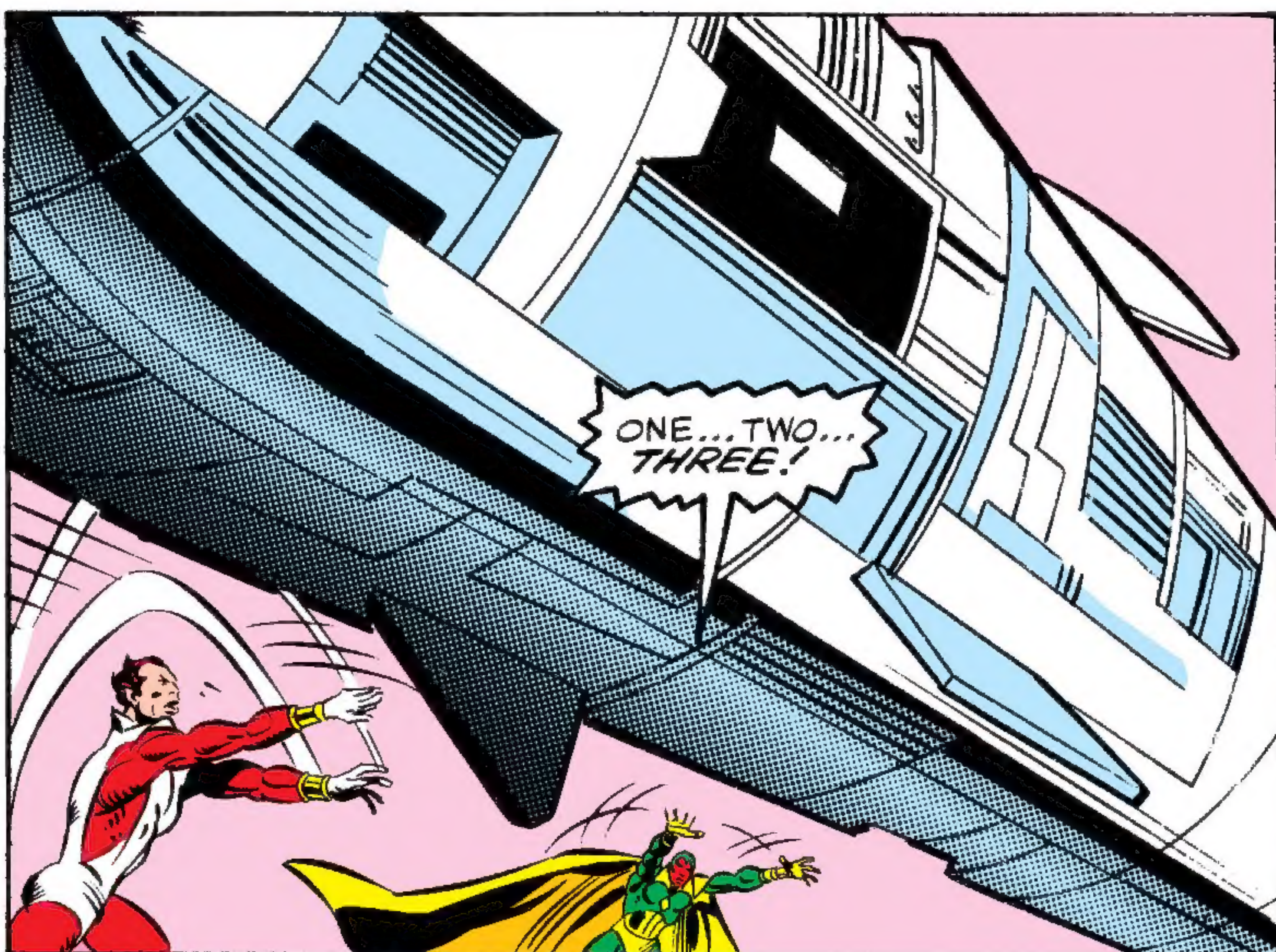
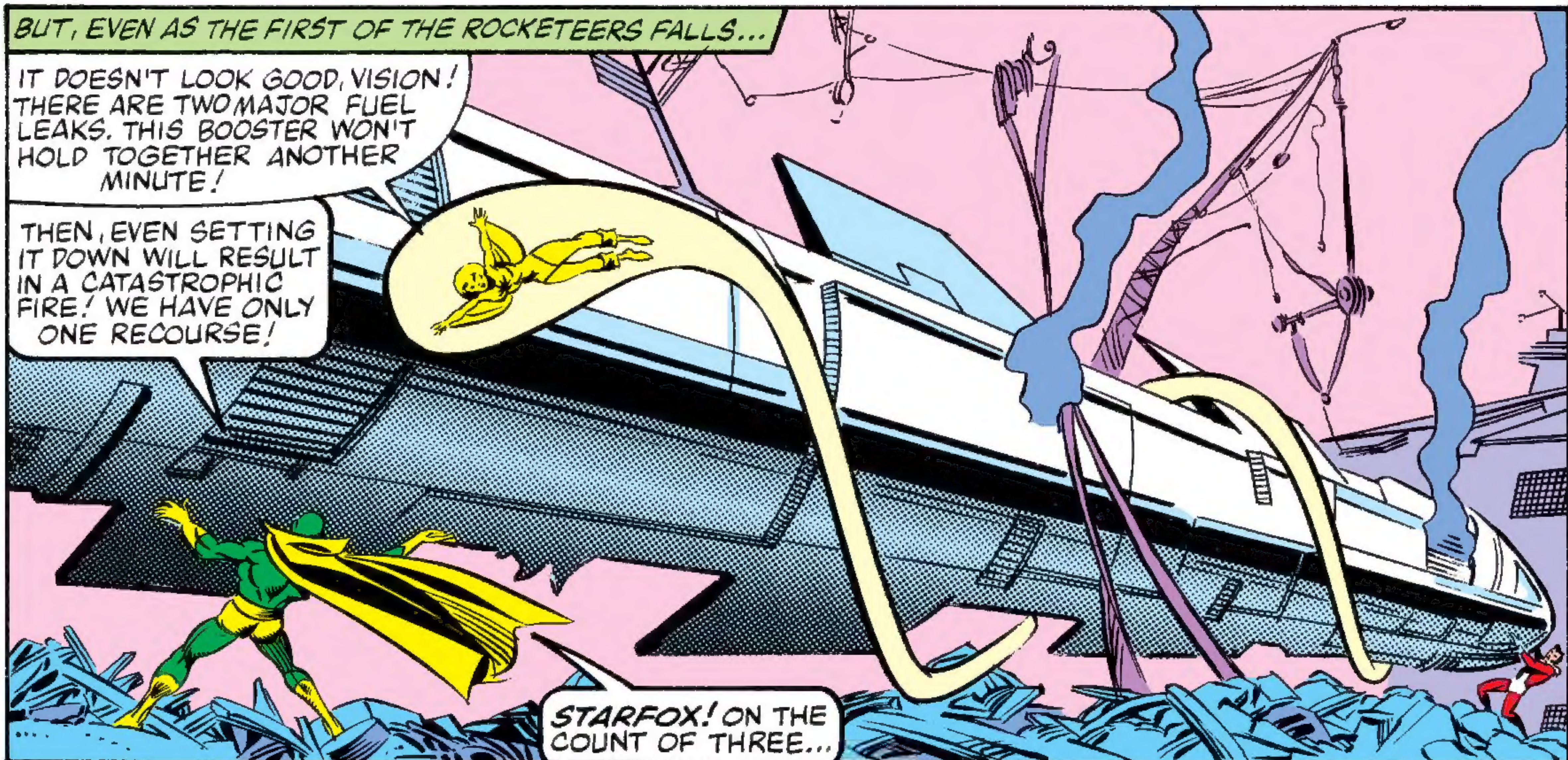
NOT IF WE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!

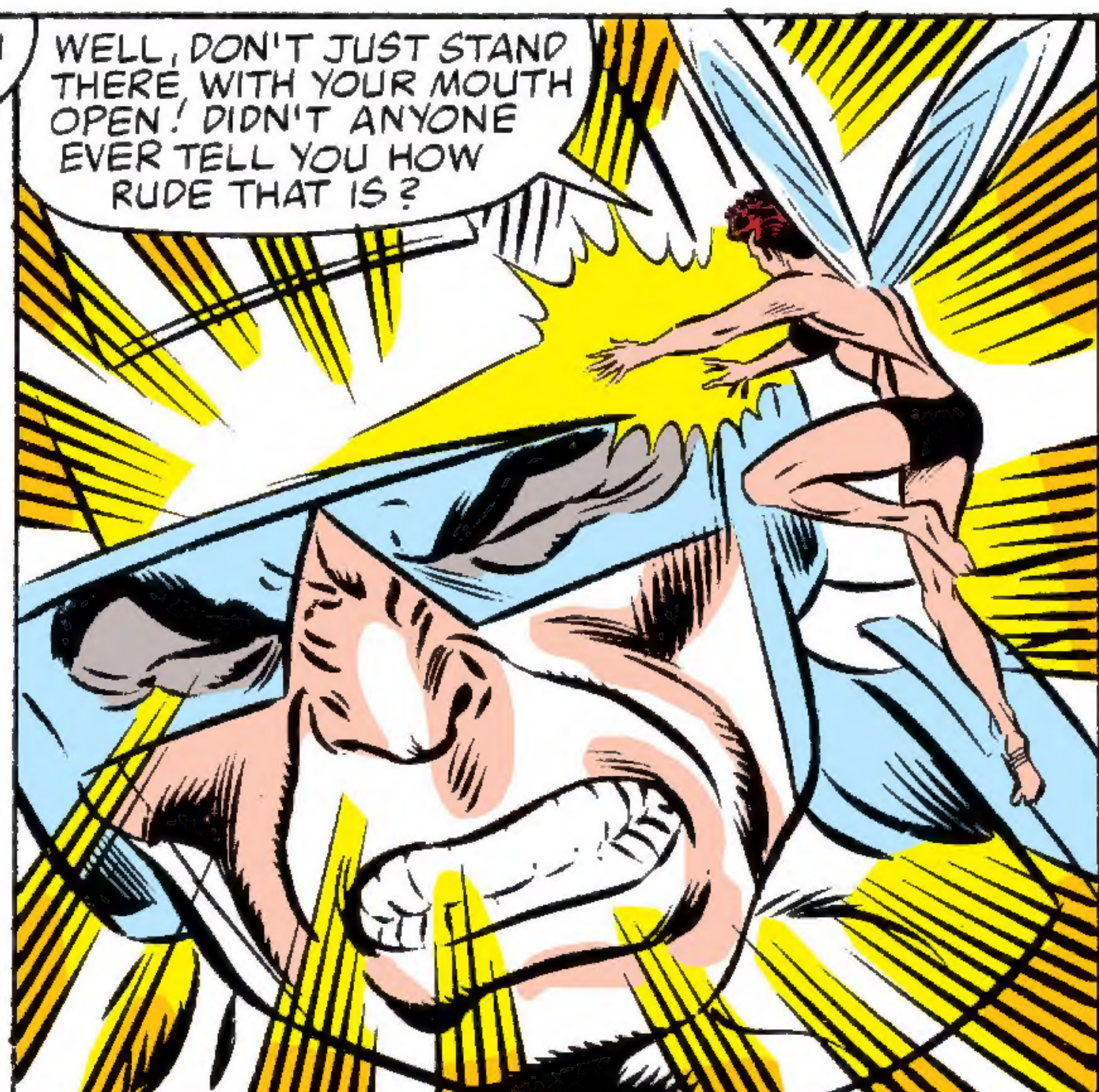
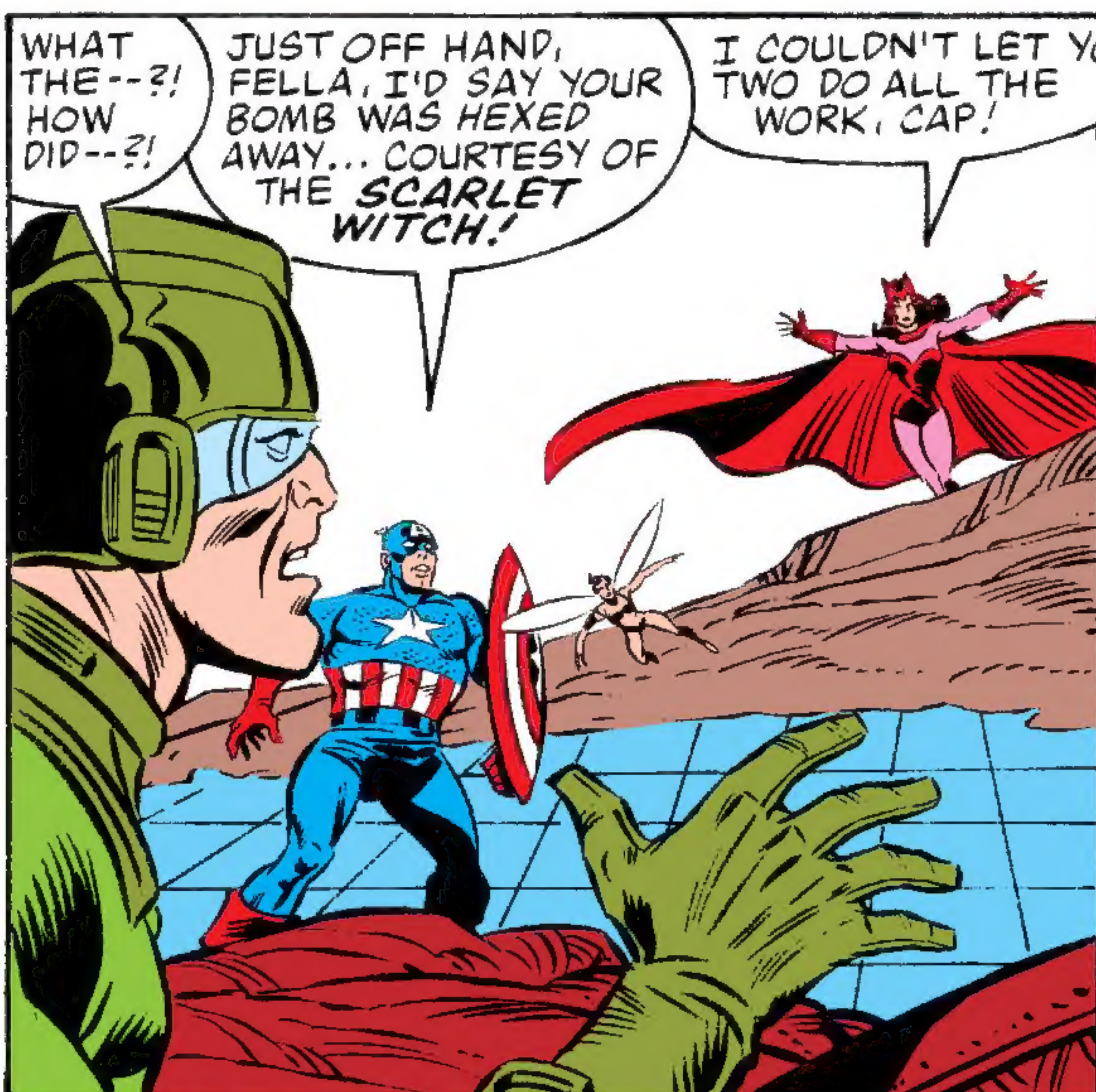
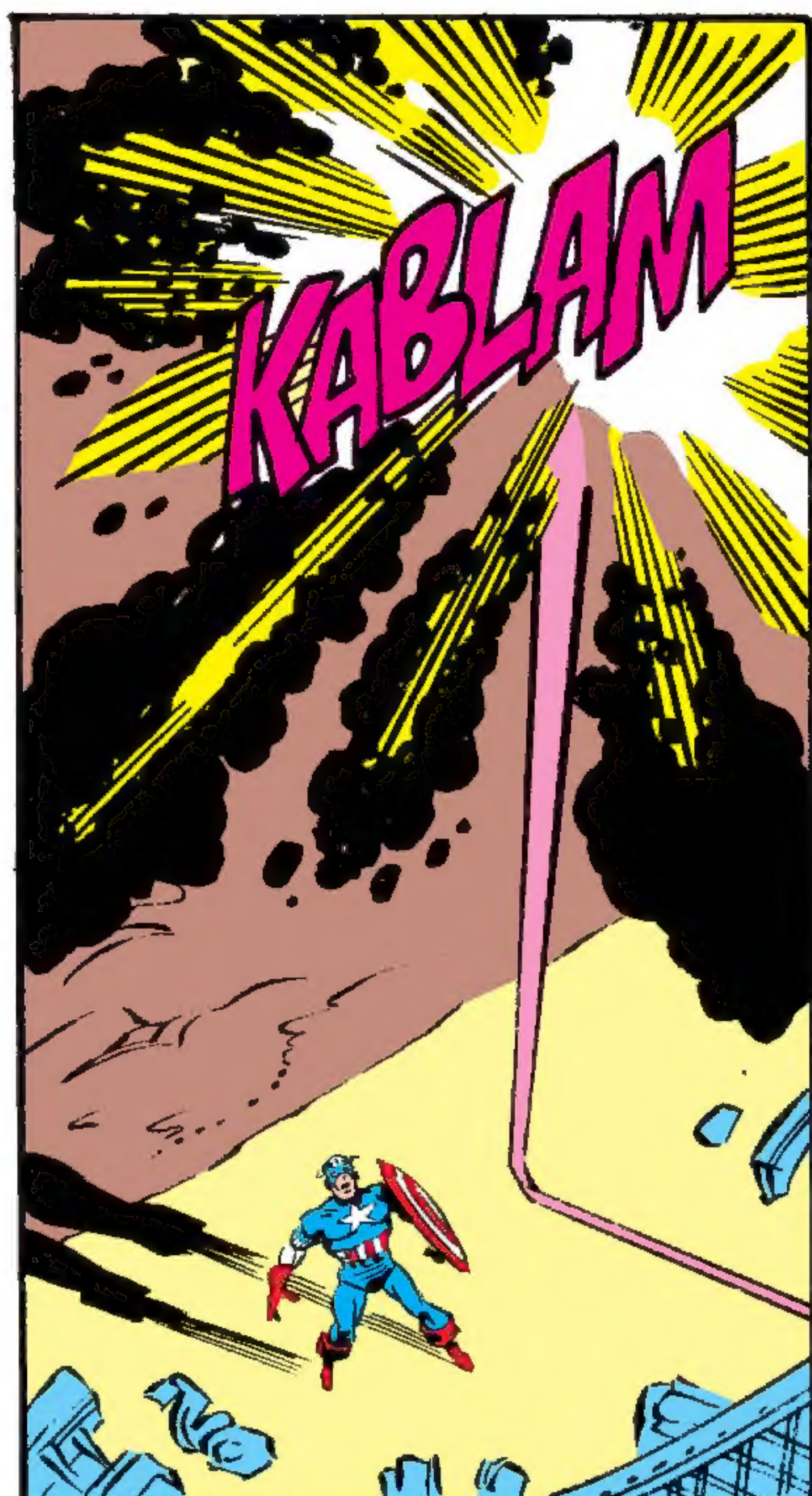
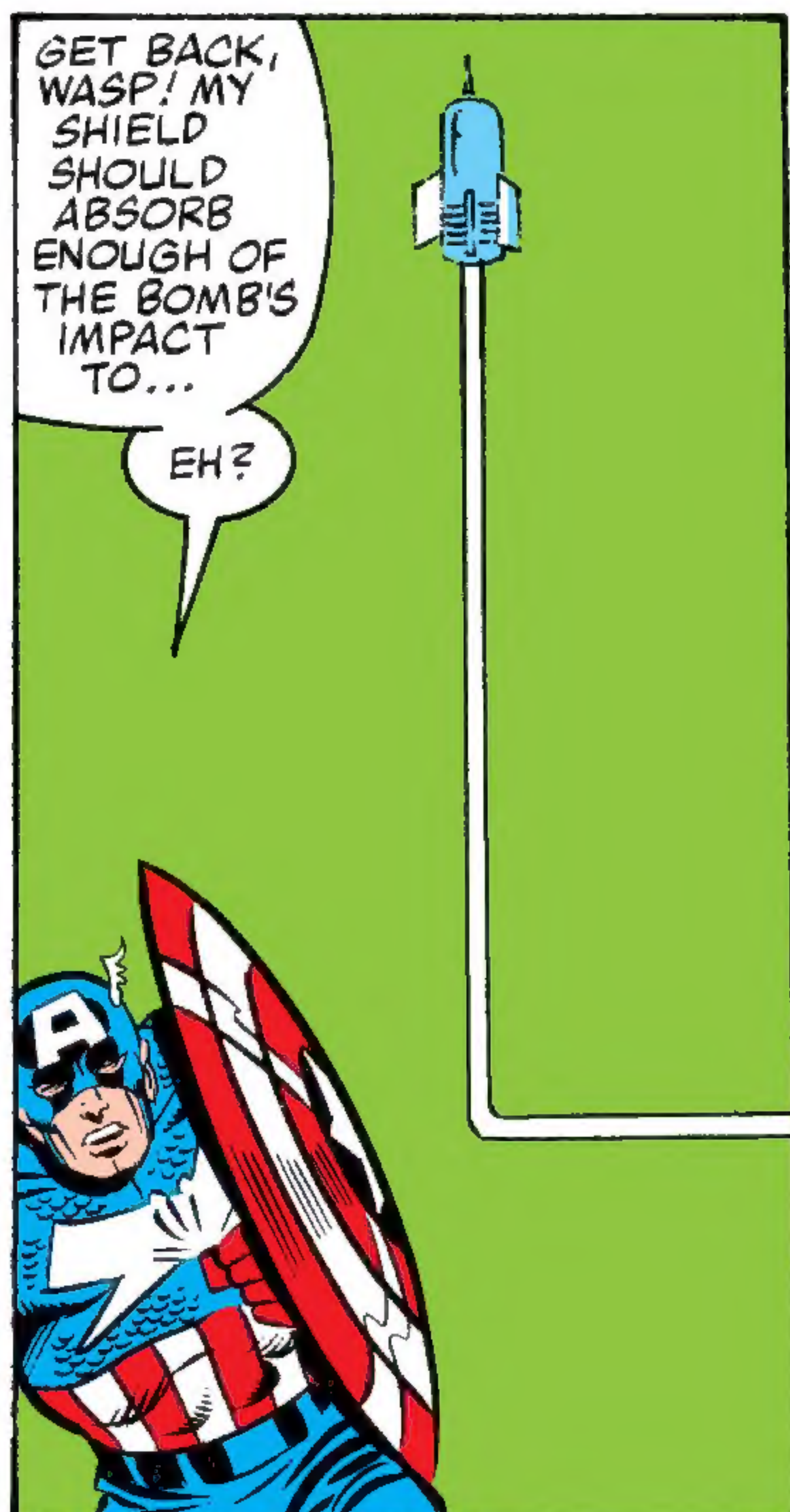
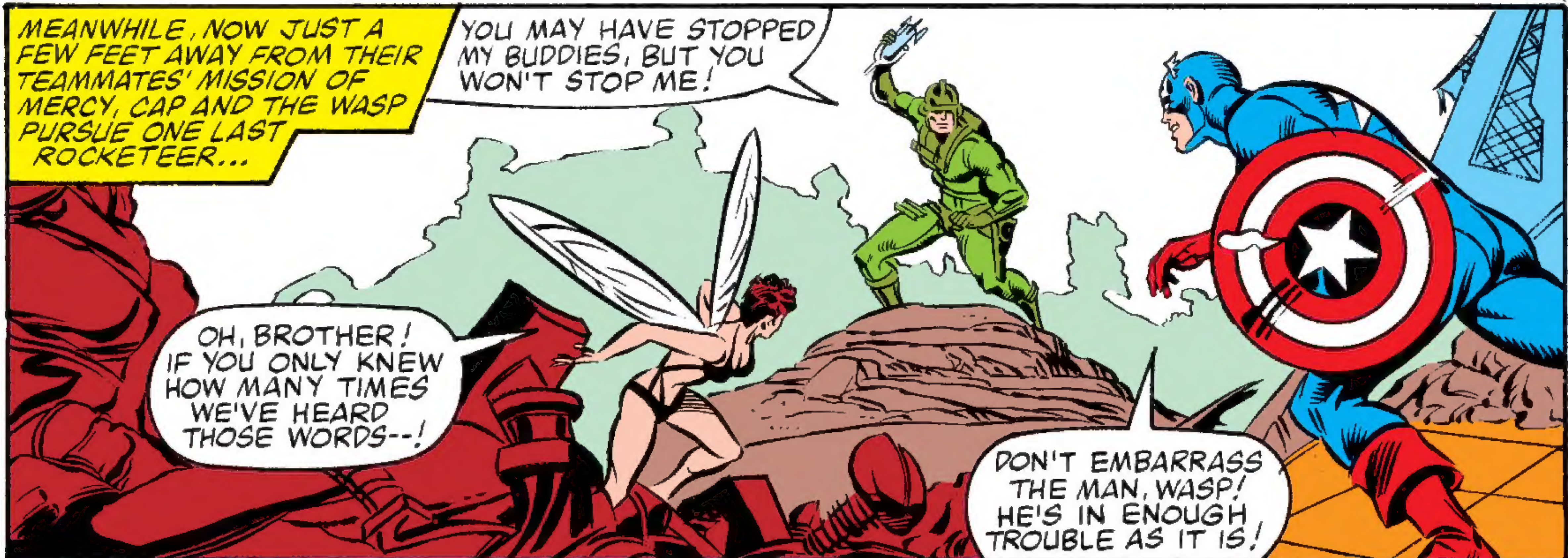
AND WE MOST CERTAINLY DO!

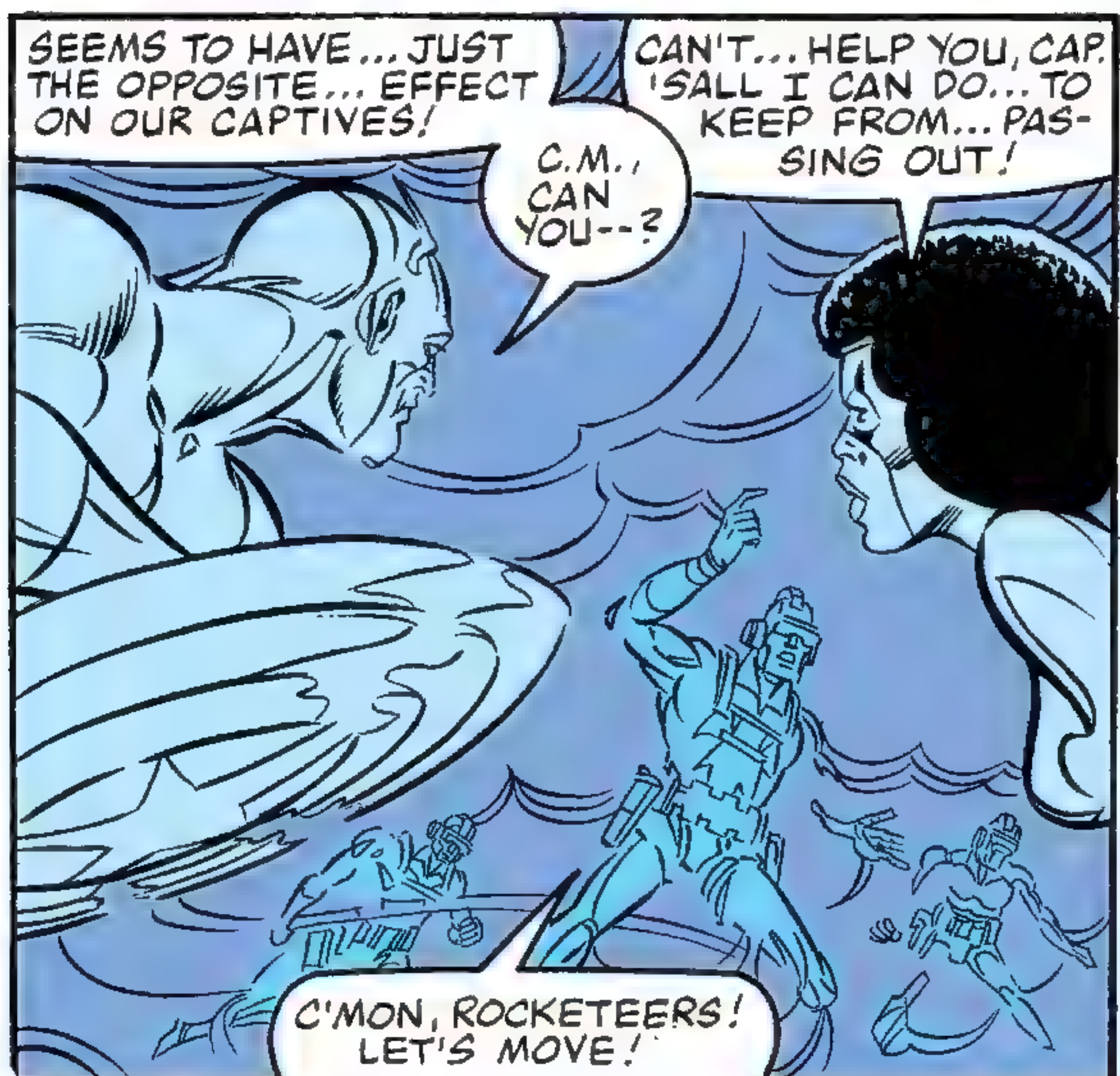
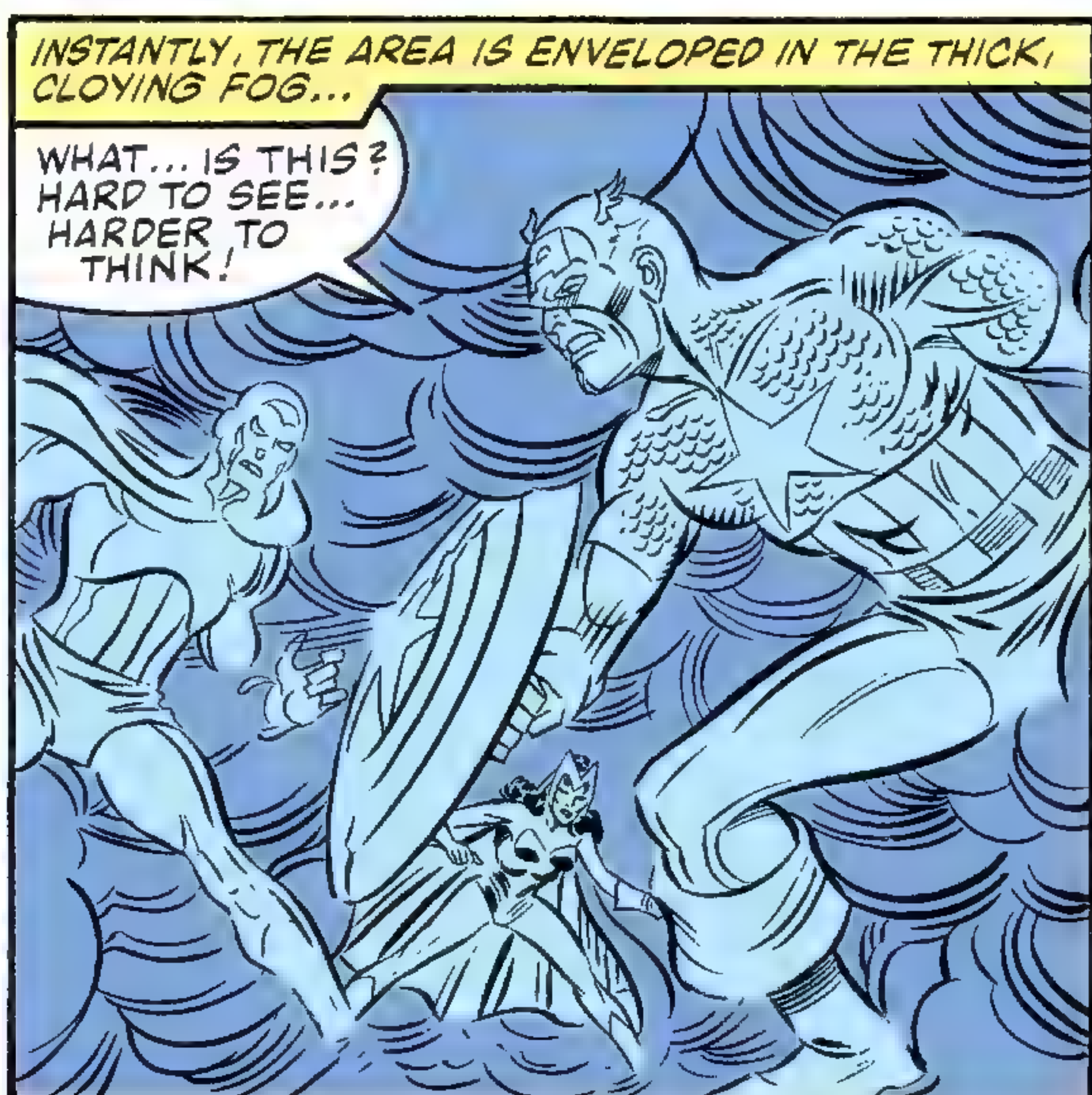
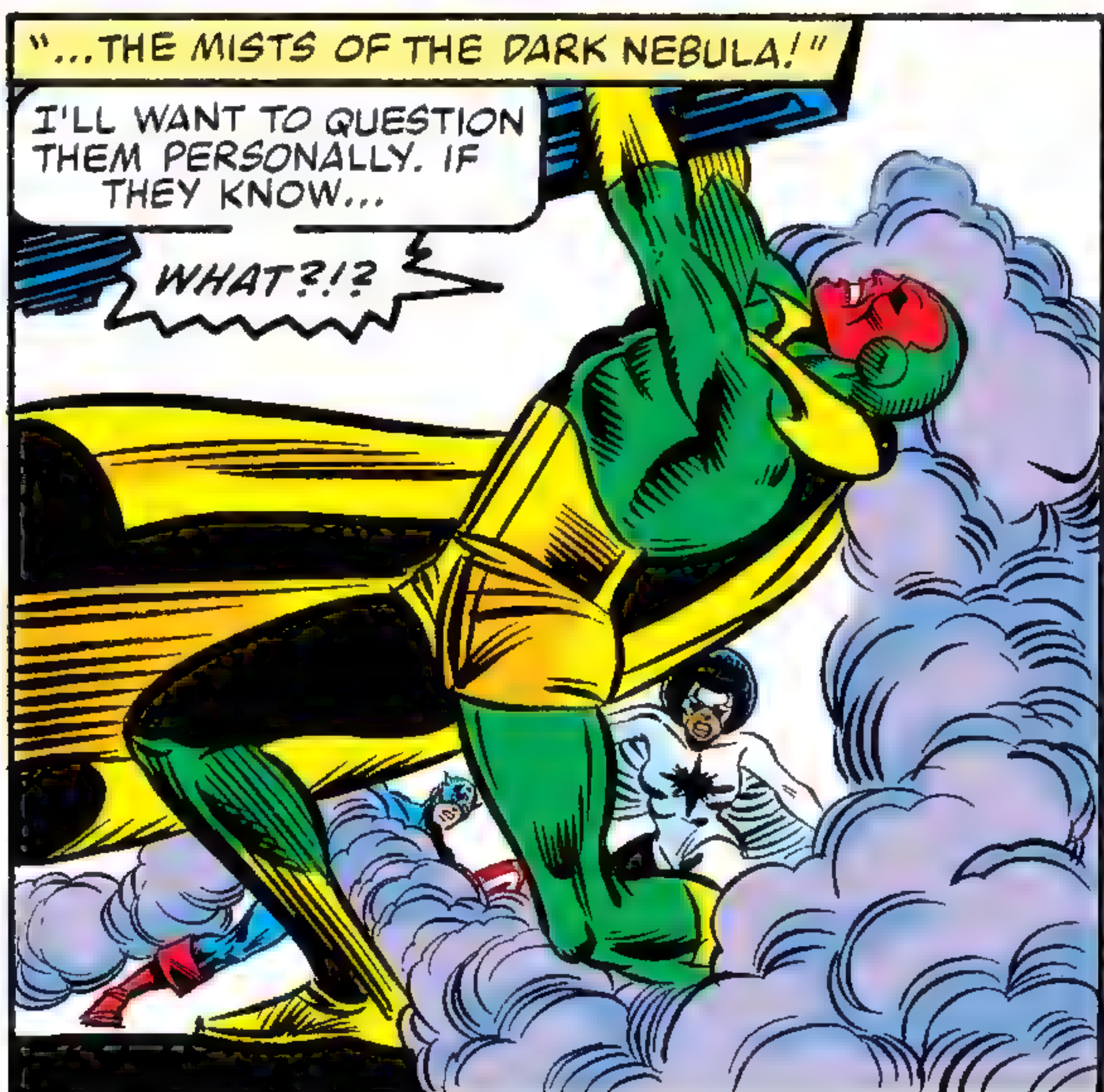
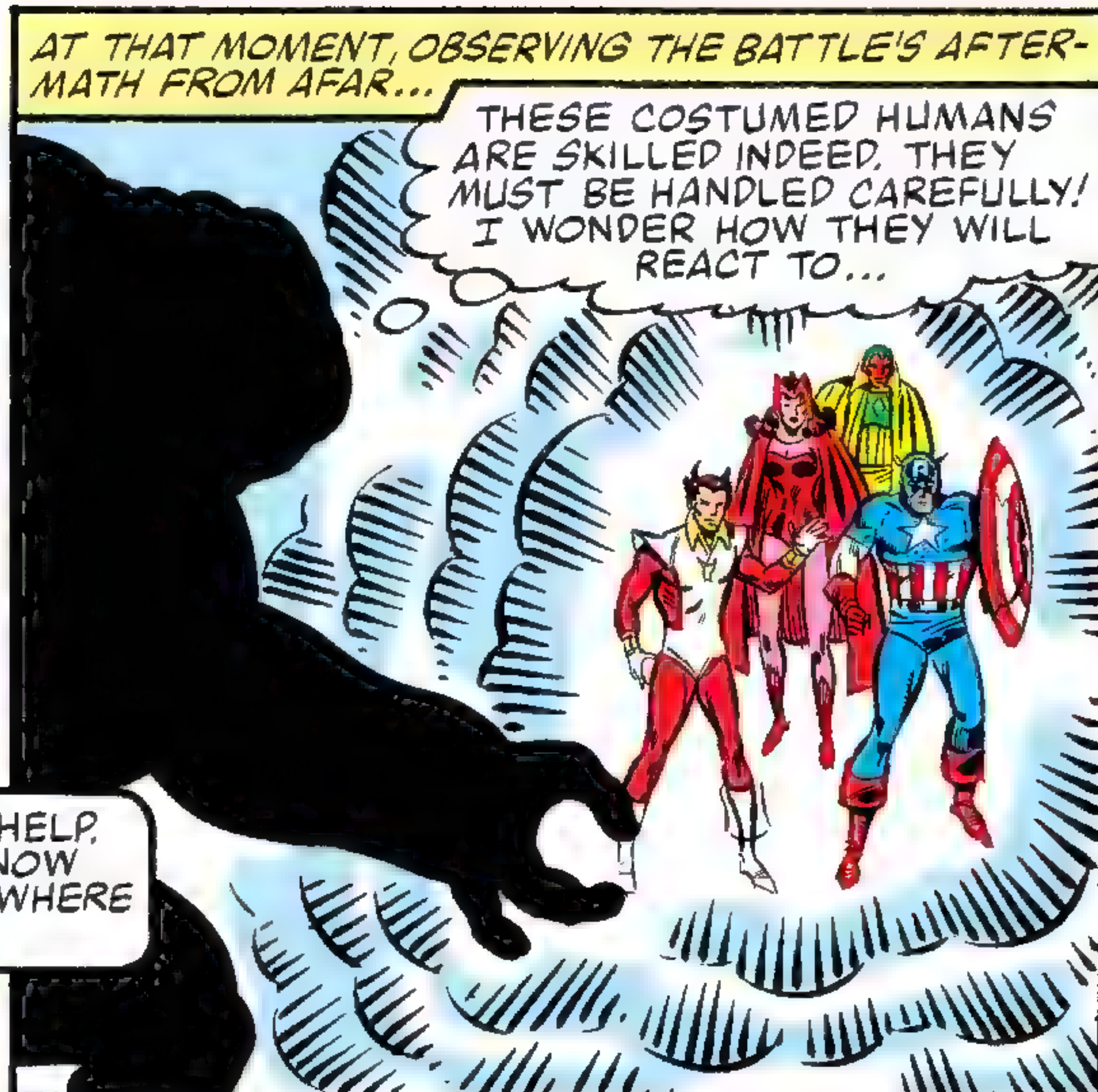


GYAAHH!

LET'S HAVE NO COMPLAINTS OUT OF YOU! I CAN MAKE MY WASP-STINGS A LOT NASTIER THAN THAT!







WHATEVER IT IS, I MUST FIGHT IT! THEY MUST NOT GET AWAY!

DOGGEDLY, THE VISION FORCES HIMSELF THROUGH THE SORCEROUS FOG AFTER HIS QUARRY.

BUT BEFORE HE CAN LAY HIS HANDS ON THEM...

NO SOONER DO THE FOUR ROCKETEERS VANISH OVER THE HORIZON, THAN THE MYSTERIOUS FOG DISPERSES, AS QUICKLY AS IT HAD APPEARED...

EVIDENTLY, THE VISION WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEIR HAVING HELP!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, JANET?

I AM NOW! BUT WHEN THAT FOG HIT, I GOT SO WOOLY I COULDN'T STAY AIRBORNE! IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO GROW BACK TO NORMAL!

HOW ABOUT YOU, VISION? ANY PROBLEMS?

OF COURSE NOT, CAP. EVEN AT ITS STANDARD DENSITY, MY BODY IS A GOOD DEAL MORE RESILIENT THAN AN ORGANIC MAN'S!

DON'T WASTE YOUR CONCERN ON ME. THERE ARE INJURED TO BE HELPED!

SOUNDS LIKE THE ONLY THING WOUNDED WAS HIS PRIDE!

VISION, YOU WORRY ME!

WE FAILED! MY FIRST OFFICIAL BATTLE AS AVENGERS LEADER, AND THE ENEMY GOT AWAY! I SUPPOSE I SHOULD FIND SOLACE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE SABOTAGE WAS CUT SHORT AND LIVES WERE SAVED... BUT I CANNOT!

I MUST NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO BE SATISFIED BY ANYTHING LESS THAN TOTAL VICTORY... NOT IF MY LONG-RANGE PLANS ARE TO SUCCEED!

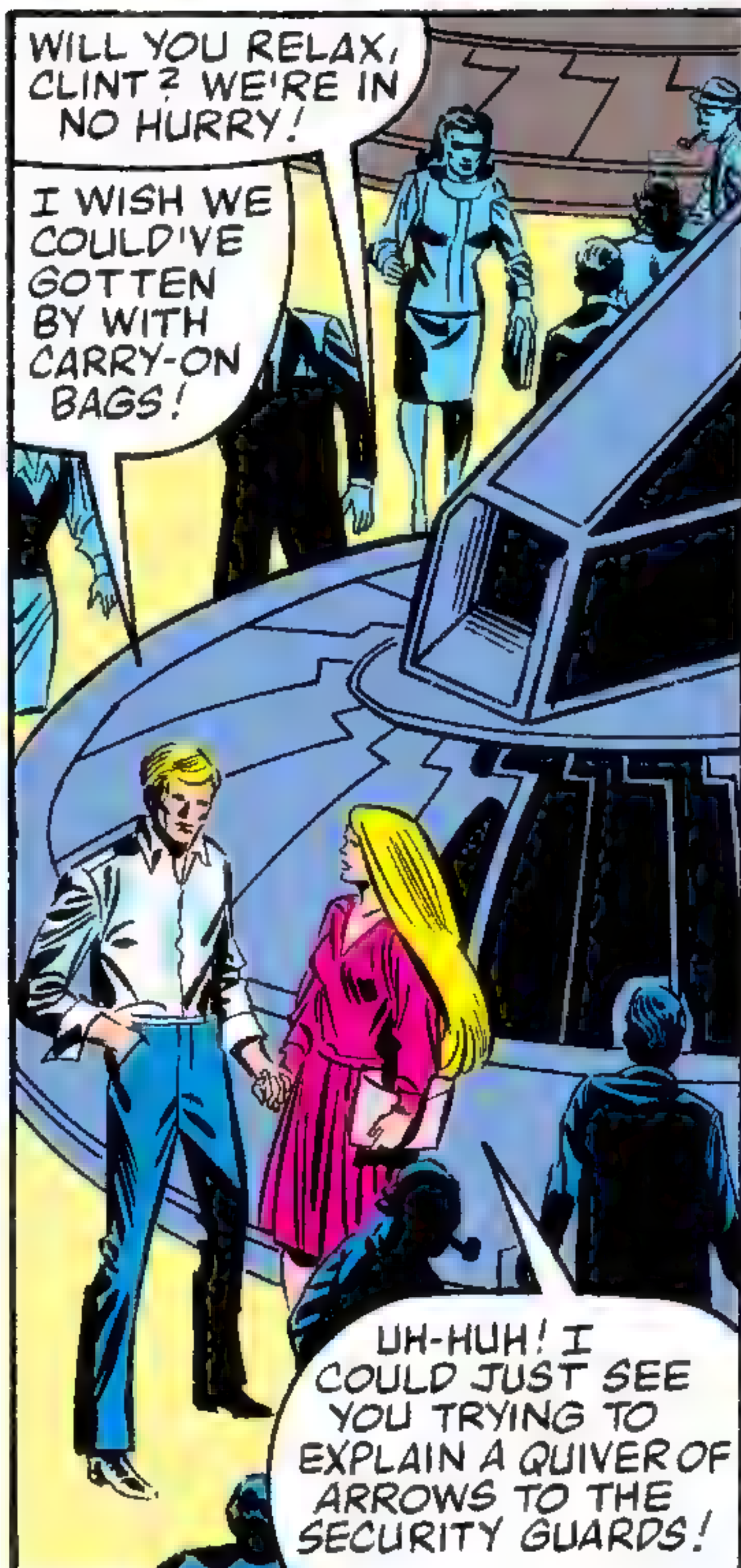
THE AVENGERS MUST FERRET OUT THE POWER BEHIND THE ROCKETEERS AND BRING IT DOWN! THE TRUST OF THE WORLD COULD DEPEND ON IT!



AT THAT MOMENT, AT LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...

PARTING FLIGHTS
↑

THIS IS THE PART OF TRAVELING I HATE MOST!



WILL YOU RELAX, CLINT? WE'RE IN NO HURRY!

I WISH WE COULD'VE GOTTEN BY WITH CARRY-ON BAGS!

UH-HUH! I COULD JUST SEE YOU TRYING TO EXPLAIN A QUIVER OF ARROWS TO THE SECURITY GUARDS!



BUT, EVENTUALLY...

AH, THERE'S THE MAN WE'RE LOOKING FOR, BOBBI!



BILL! BILL FOSTER! HOW YA DOIN', MAN? YOU LOOK GREAT!

HUH? OH... WELL... THANKS!

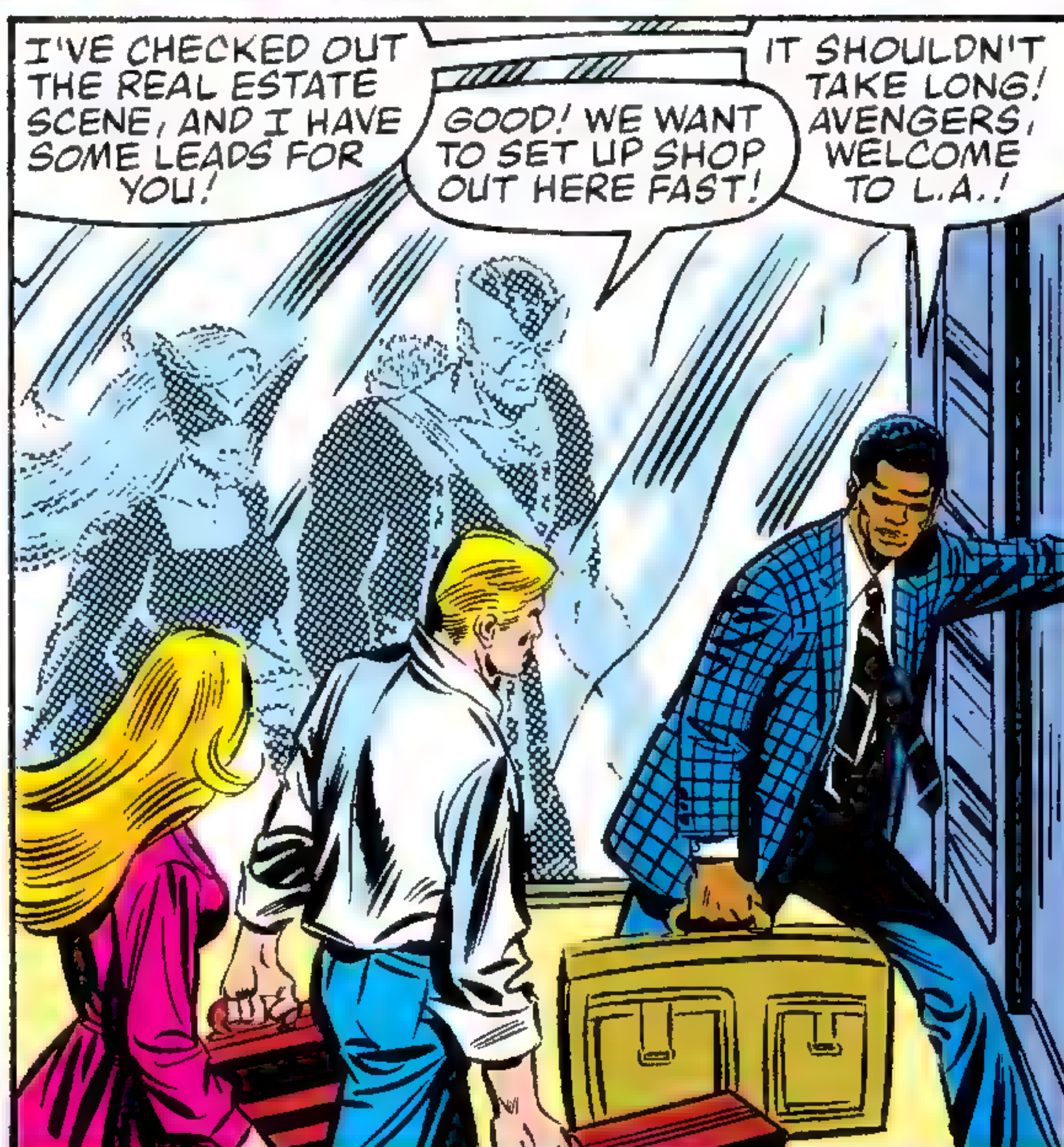
UH... DO I KNOW YOU?



IN THESE CLOTHES, PROBABLY NOT! BARTON'S THE NAME, AVENGIN'S MY GAME! THIS'S MY WIFE, BOBBI!

HAWKEYE! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU'D BE TRAVELING INCOGNITO! HERE, LET ME TAKE ONE OF YOUR BAGS!

HI!



I'VE CHECKED OUT THE REAL ESTATE SCENE, AND I HAVE SOME LEADS FOR YOU!

GOOD! WE WANT TO SET UP SHOP OUT HERE FAST!

IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG! AVENGERS, WELCOME TO L.A.!

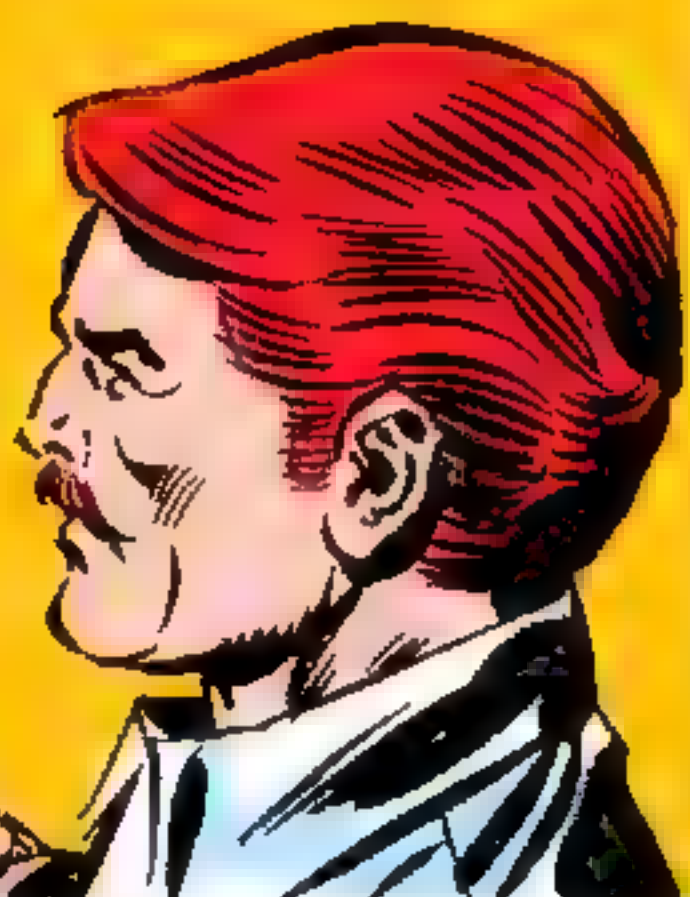
SOMETIME LATER, BACK AT THE CAPE--



--IN THE OFFICE OF MILITARY SECURITY...

YOUR CALL CAME RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME VERY DELICATE WORK, GENERAL! THIS BETTER BE IMPORTANT!

IT IS, CATHER. COME IN AND CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU!



IF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT EXPLOSION OVER AT TEST-PAD FIVE, I HOPE YOU'RE... GOOD LORD!



I SEE YOU RECOGNIZE OUR GUESTS. GOOD...

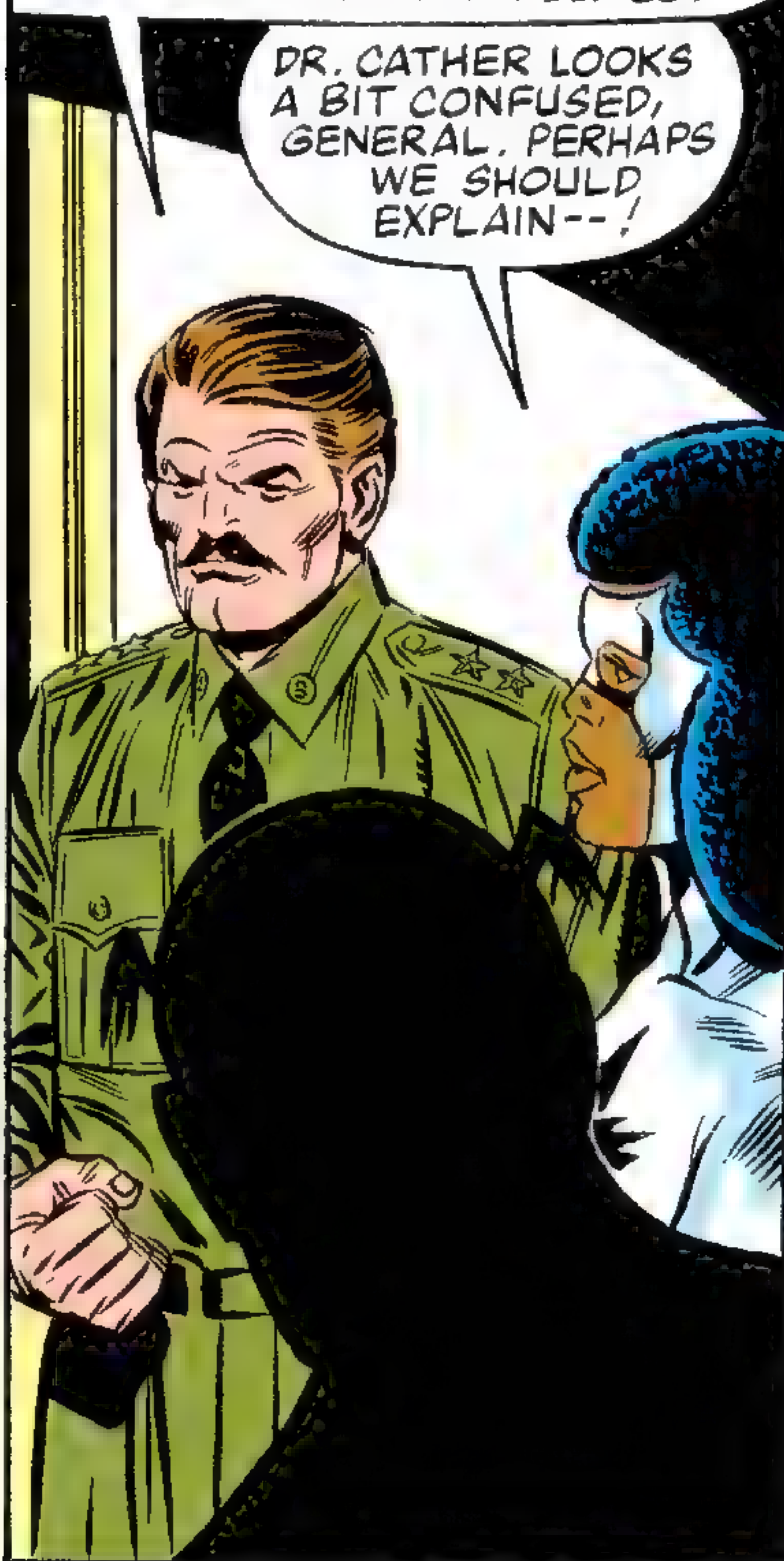
...THAT WILL MAKE INTRODUCTIONS SIMPLER! AVENGERS, THIS IS DR. WOODROW CATHER, THE BASE'S HIGHEST RANKING CIVILIAN SCIENTIST.

BRIDGES, WHY ARE THEY HERE? I MEAN...



NO NEED TO WHISPER, CATHER. THESE PEOPLE ARE HERE TO HELP US. AND IF WHAT WASHINGTON SAYS IS TRUE, THEY MAY BE THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HELP US.

DR. CATHER LOOKS A BIT CONFUSED, GENERAL. PERHAPS WE SHOULD EXPLAIN--!



I WAS GETTING TO THAT, CAPTAIN... AH... MARVEL. BUT A PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!

SOMEONE GET THE LIGHTS!



THAT'S WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST... AN ALIEN BEAST THAT CALLS ITSELF A DIRE WRAITH!



ALIEN--? Y-YOU'RE NOT JOKING!

WE'RE QUITE SERIOUS, DOCTOR! THE AVENGERS HAVE AIDED AUTHORITIES IN HUSHING UP NEWS OF MAN'S RECENT ENCOUNTERS WITH ALIEN LIFE-FORMS--

--BUT, AS THE BEARER OF HIGH SECURITY CLEARANCE, YOU ARE NO DOUBT AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH RACES AS THE KREE AND THE SKRULLS.

RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT THESE WRAITHS ARE A VARIANT FORM OF SKRULL!* THEY INTEND TO OVERRUN THE EARTH!

**SEE ROM #50.*

"THE WRAITH POSSESSES A DRILL-LIKE TONGUE WITH WHICH IT SLAYS ITS VICTIMS AND...THERE IS NO DELICATE WAY TO PUT THIS..."

"...FEEDS UPON THEIR BRAINS, AS PART OF THIS PROCESS, THE WRAITHS ABSORB THEIR VICTIMS' MEMORIES, EVEN AS THEIR UN-STABLE BODIES ASSUME THEIR VICTIMS' APPEARANCE."

"UNTIL RECENTLY, THERE WAS ANOTHER BREED OF DIRE WRAITH... BUT THEY WERE APPARENTLY EXTERMINATED BY THE DOMINANT FORM. THOSE WRAITHS USED AN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN CONQUEST..."

...WHILE THE DOMINANT SPECIES HAVE MASTERED A DARK ART WHICH WE CAN ONLY CALL SORCERY!

"LESS THAN A WEEK AGO, A GROUP OF DIRE WRAITHS USED THEIR SORCERY TO ATTACK ON S.H.I.E.L.D.'S HELICARRIER.* THEY NEARLY DESTROYED IT!"

**THAT'S THE SUPREME HEADQUARTERS INTERNATIONAL ESPIONAGE LAW-ENFORCEMENT DIVISION, AND IT HAPPENED IN ROM #53.*

WHAT'S CURIOUS IS TODAY'S ATTACK BY A BAND OF SELF-STYLED "ROCKETEERS." A SIMILAR GROUP ONCE LAID SIEGE TO THE TOWN OF CLAIRTON, WEST VIRGINIA. THE GROUP TURNED OUT TO BE SCIENCE WRAITHS.

BUT, AS I SAID, THAT BREED WAS SUPPOSEDLY WIPED OUT...AND FROM ALL WE'VE LEARNED, THE SORCERY-WRAITHS DESPISE THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY!

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? **LIGHTS!**

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT OUR RECENT ACCIDENTS HAVEN'T BEEN ACCIDENTAL! IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT KIND OF ALIEN IS TO BLAME! WHAT MATTERS IS FINDING 'EM AND STOPPING 'EM!

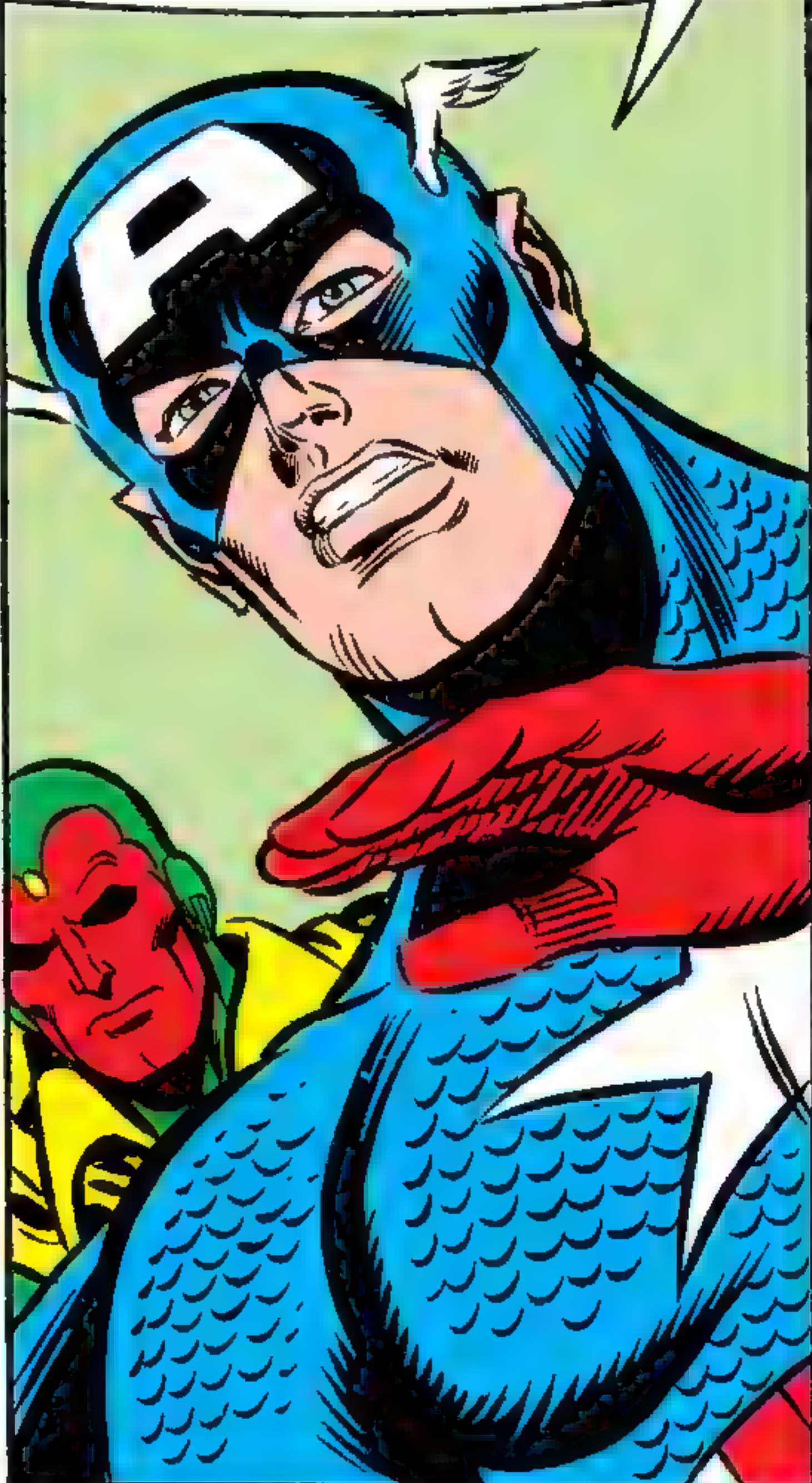
WITH YOUR HELP, WE WILL GENERAL!

WELL, WHATEVER STEPS YOU TAKE, SOME PRIORITY HAD BETTER BE SHOWN TO MY ION-DRIVE PROJECT! IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT MOST FUNDS HAVE BEEN DIVERTED TO THE SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM!



I WON'T STAND BY AND SEE SOME BUG-EYED MONSTERS DEMOLISH MY WORK... NOT WHEN IT'S THE BEST HOPE FOR MAN TO REACH THE STARS! I WANT THE GUARD BY OUR PROTOTYPE ROCKET TO BE DOUBLED!

I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, DR. CATHER, BUT THE WRAITHS COULD STRIKE ANYWHERE AT THE CAPE. YOUR PROJECT ISN'T THEIR ONLY TARGET!



I'D SAY IT'S HARDLY A TARGET AT ALL! NONE OF OUR "ACCIDENTS" HAVE STRUCK YOUR FOOL ION-DRIVE, CATHER! IF YOU ASK ME, THE WRAITHS KNOW IT'S NOT WORTH ATTACKING!



THE SPACE SHUTTLE SHOULD GET PRIORITY ATTENTION! JUST ON MILITARY POTENTIAL ALONE, IT'S THE OBVIOUS TARGET! I INTEND TO CALL OUT A FULL BATTALION TO HELP THE AVENGERS GUARD IT!



NO, YOU WILL NOT!

KRAK



THE AVENGERS WILL BE THE ONLY ADDITIONAL FORCE ON ALERT! THIS MISSION IS UNDER MY COMMAND...

MY DESK!

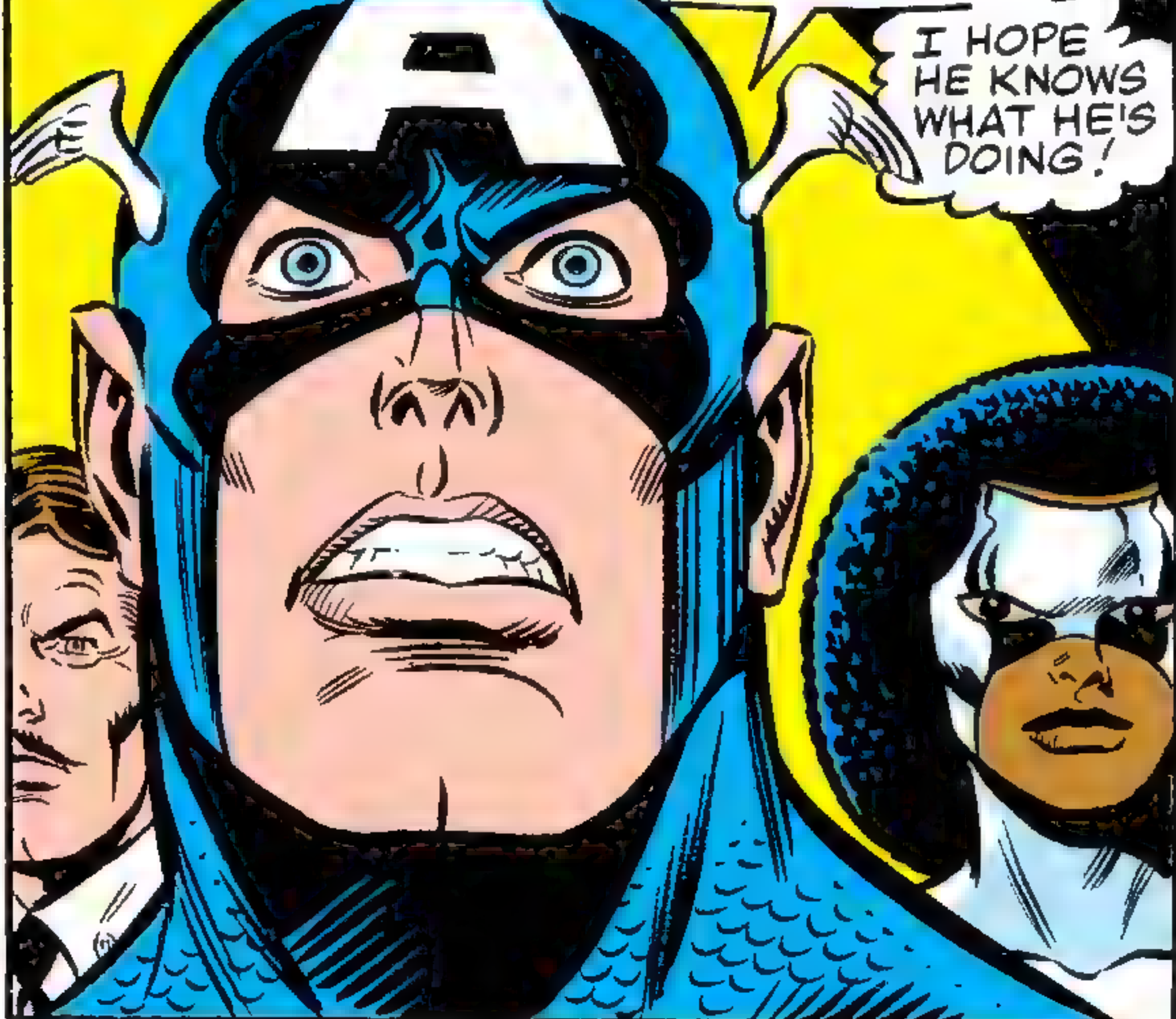
...BY SPECIAL AUTHORITY GRANTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, YOUR STAFF WILL FOLLOW NORMAL SECURITY PROCEDURES, WE WILL HANDLE EVERYTHING ELSE.



JUST A MINUTE, VISION. DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE AN EXTRA COMPANY OF MEN WAITING AS A BACKUP?

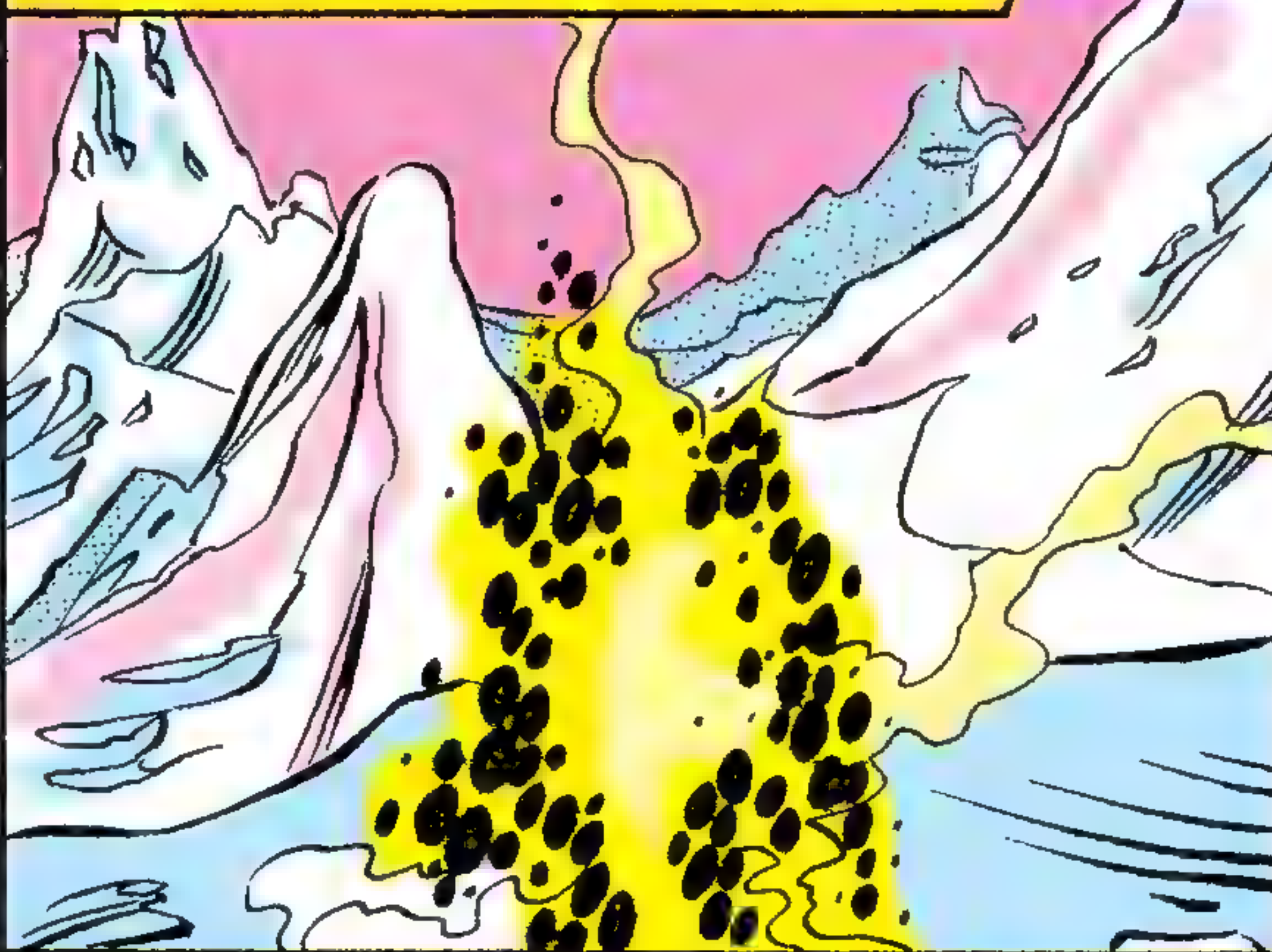
NO, CAP! AVENGERS, WE WILL RECONVENE BACK AT THE YACHT!

YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE US, GENTLEMEN! OUR CHAIRMAN... HAS PLANS OF HIS OWN!



I HOPE HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING!

HOURS LATER, DAWN IS JUST BEGINNING TO BREAK IN THE TINY BALKAN NATION OF TRANSIA...



...WHEN THE STILL AIR OF THIS MOUNTAIN PASS IS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY A CRACKLE OF UNEARTHLY ENERGY, A NIMBUS OF BLINDING LIGHT--

--AND THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF TWO RATHER STRIKING FIGURES!

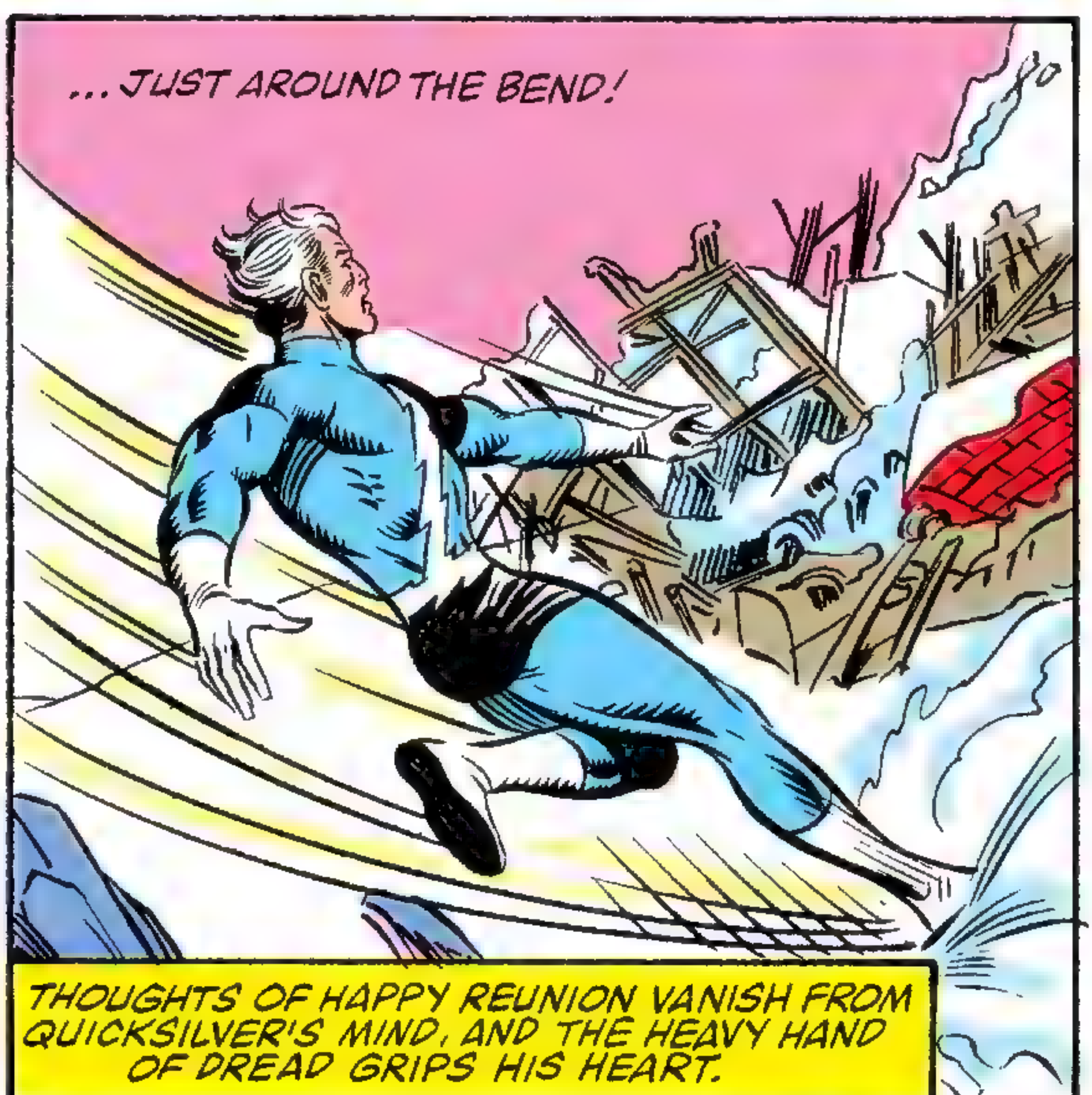


YES, THIS IS IT, LOCKJAW!



YOU'VE TELEPORTED US TO WITHIN MERE YARDS OF BOVA'S CABIN! COME ON, IT'S JUST AROUND THIS BEND!

BUT WHILE THE FLEET-FOOTED FORMER AVENGER DASHES AHEAD, HIS DOG-LIKE COMPANION HANGS BACK, AS IF SENSING THAT ALL IS NOT WELL...



...JUST AROUND THE BEND!

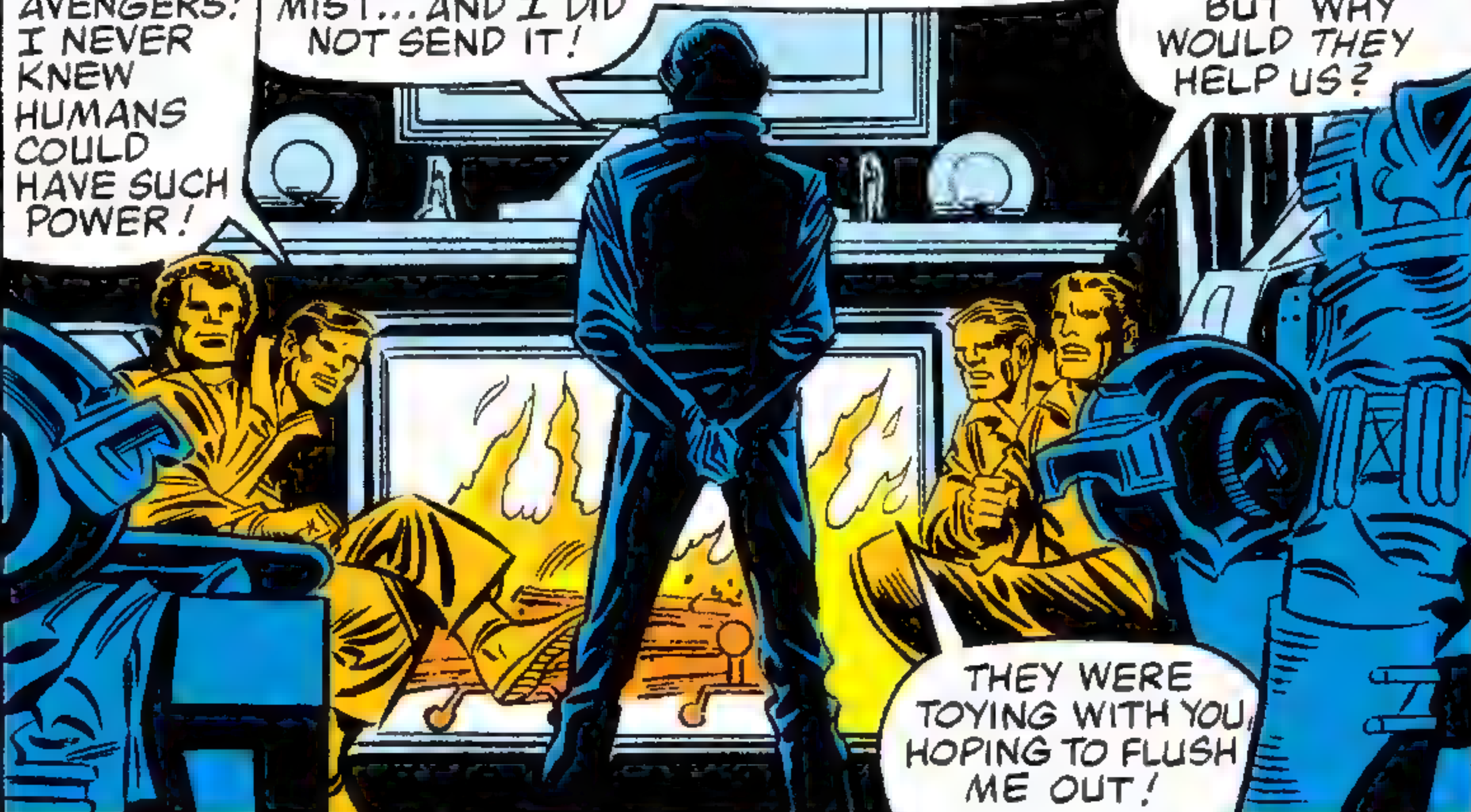
THOUGHTS OF HAPPY REUNION VANISH FROM QUICKSILVER'S MIND, AND THE HEAVY HAND OF DREAD GRIPS HIS HEART.

WHILE, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, IN A SECLUDED FLORIDA HIDEAWAY...

WE WERE NEARLY BEATEN BY THOSE AVENGERS! I NEVER KNEW HUMANS COULD HAVE SUCH POWER!

THEY'RE NOT ALL HUMAN. THEIR LEADER IS SOME MANNER OF ANDROID, BUT THAT'S OF NO MATTER. WHAT CONCERNS ME IS THAT YOU WERE SAVED BY THE DARK NEBULA MIST... AND I DID NOT SEND IT!

THEN WE'VE BEEN NOTICED BY THE SISTERHOOD?! BUT WHY WOULD THEY HELP US?

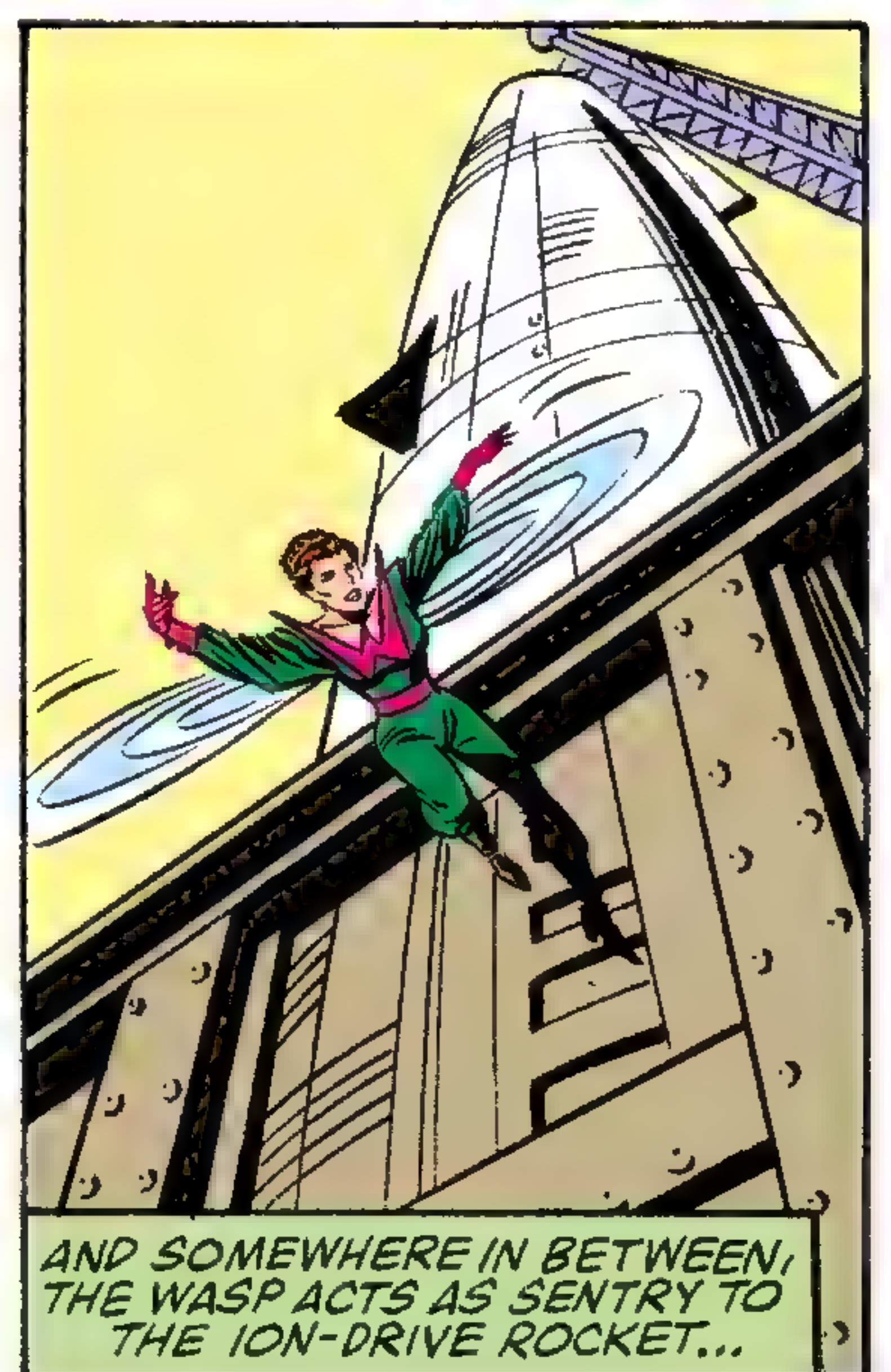
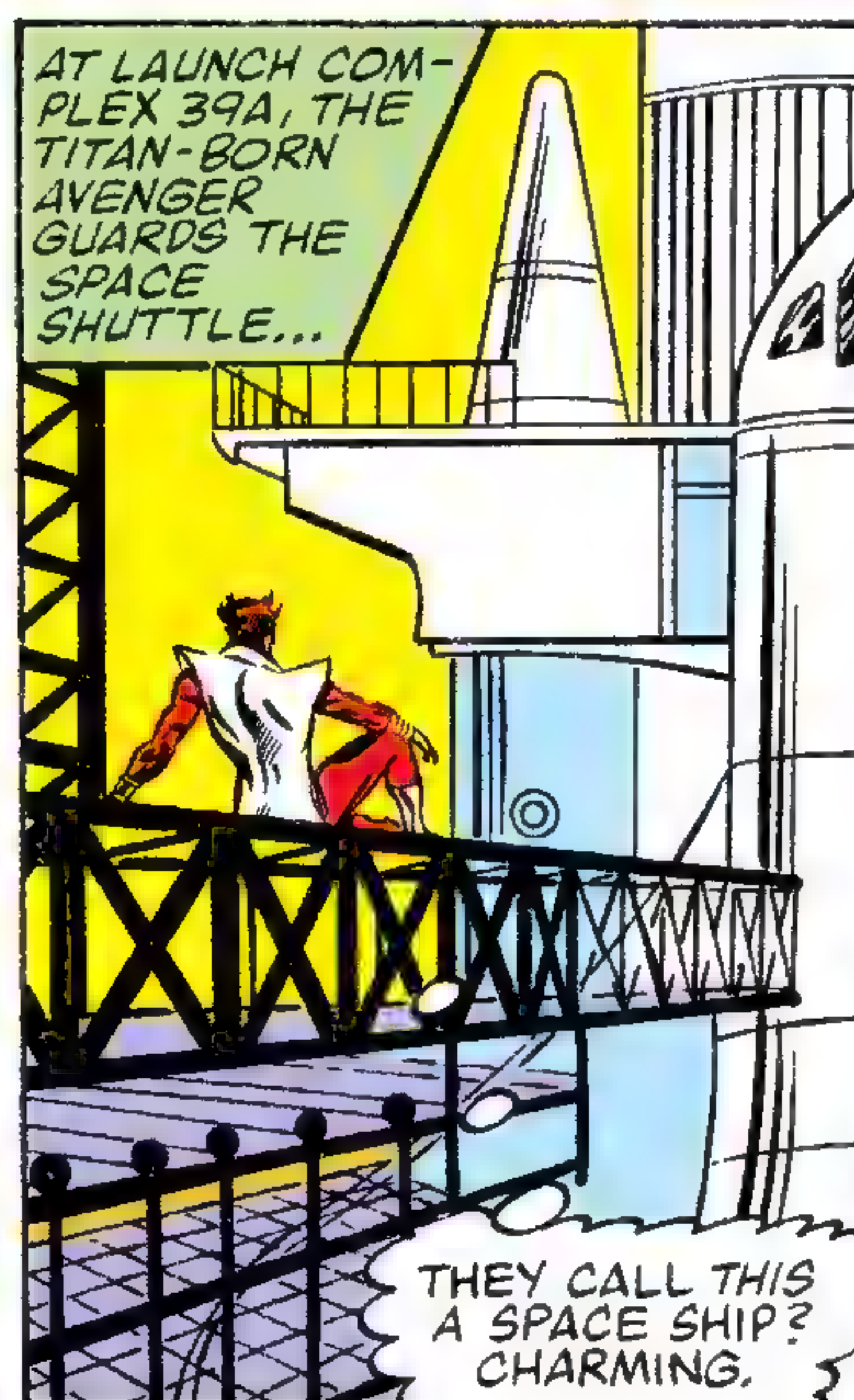
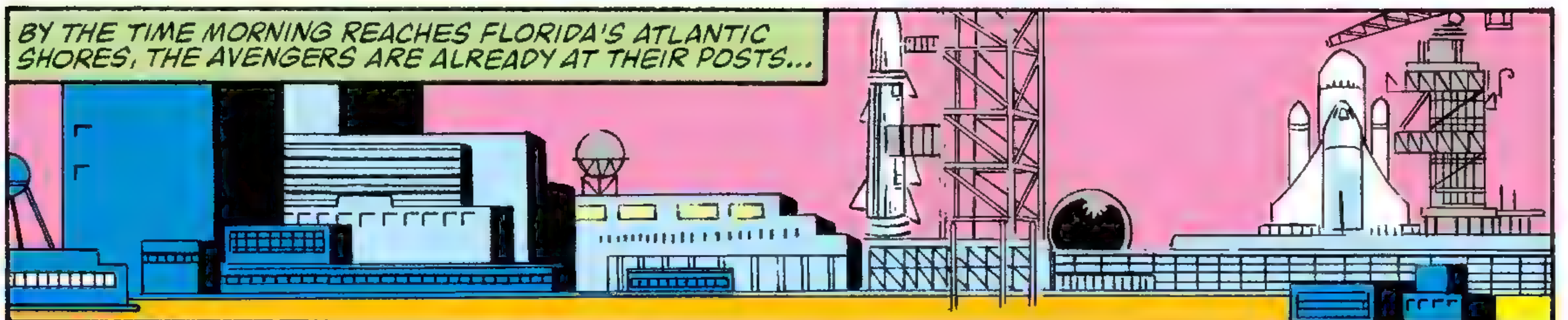
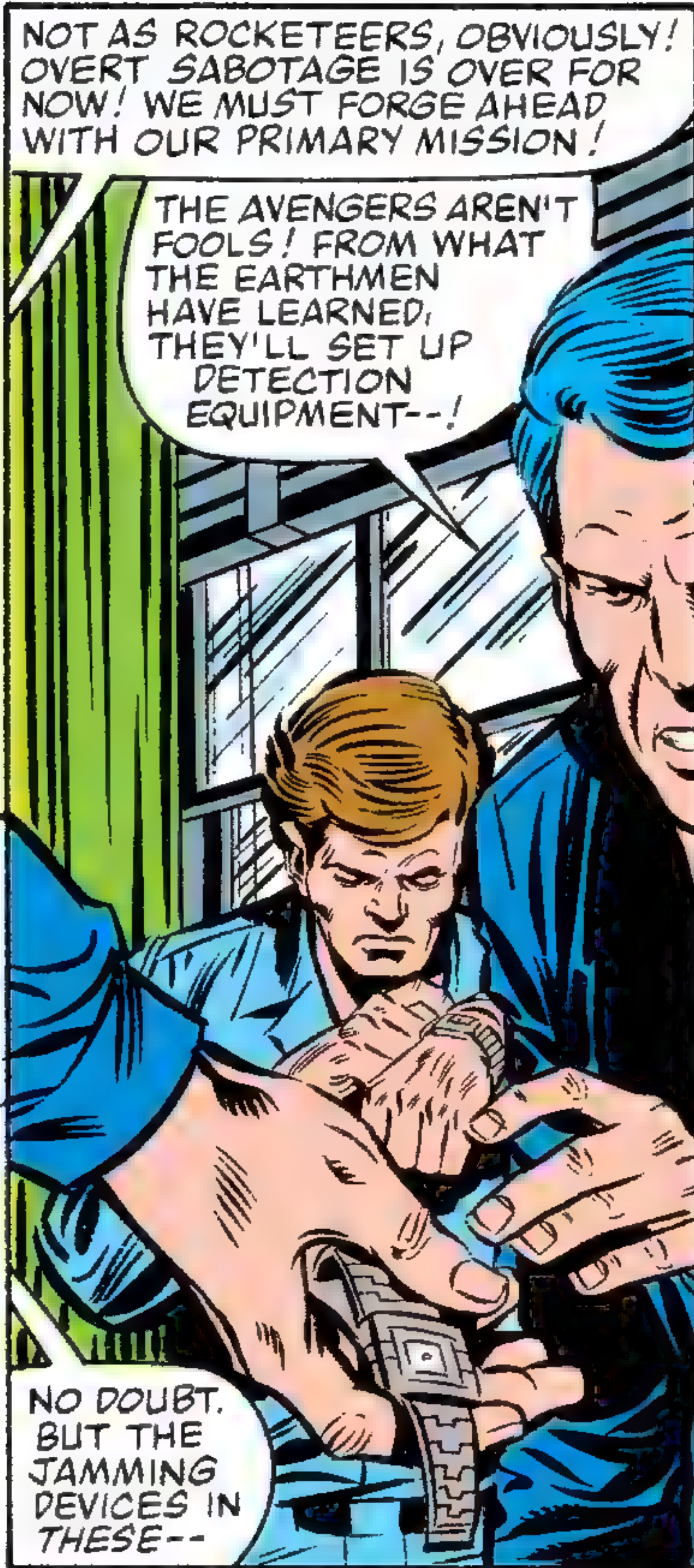


THEY WERE TOYING WITH YOU, HOPING TO FLUSH ME OUT!

BUT I THINK THEY'VE BEEN DISTRACTED BY THE AVENGERS, AND THAT GIVES US A CHANCE TO FINISH OUR WORK!



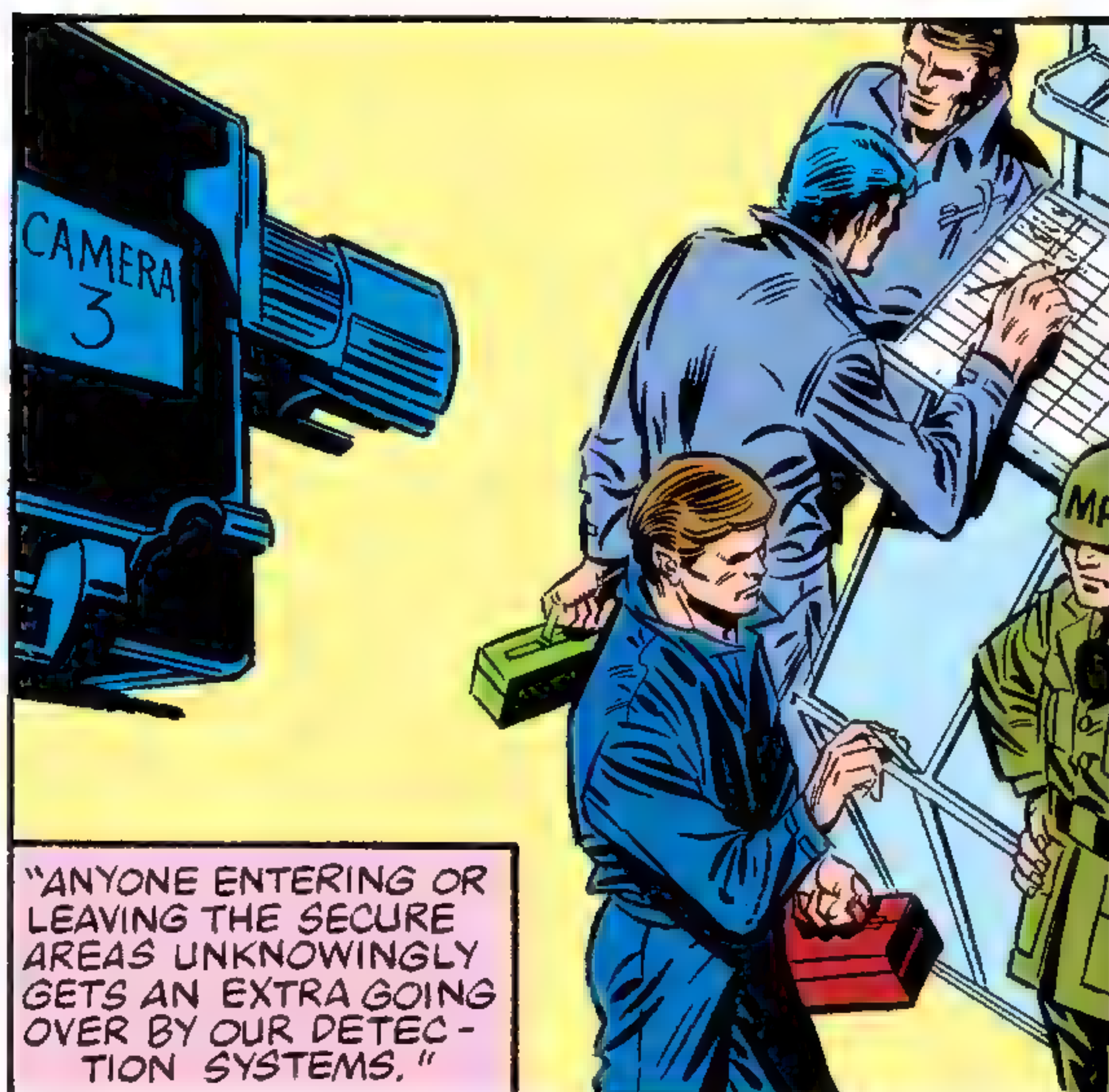
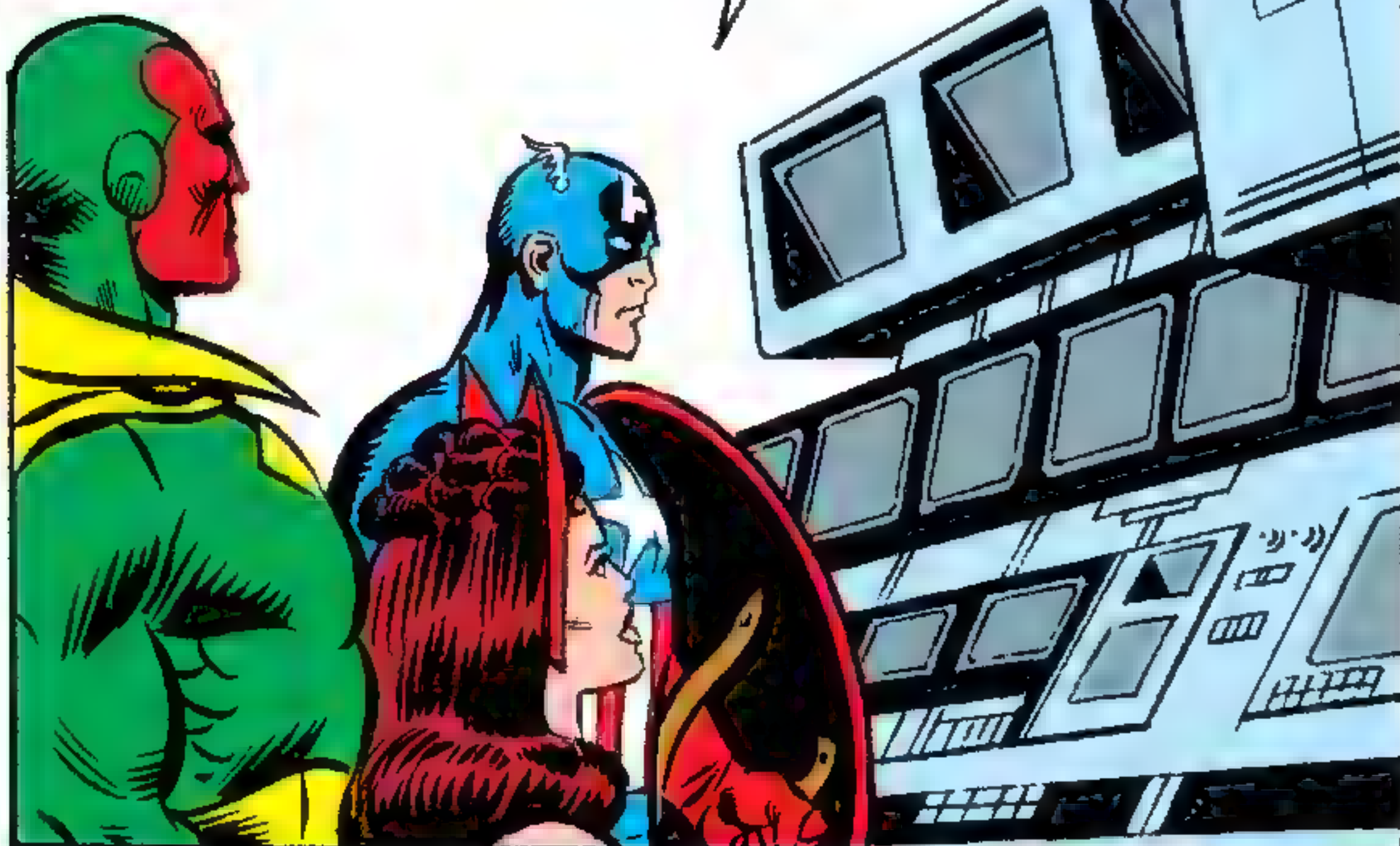
WITH THE AVENGERS AROUND? HOW?!



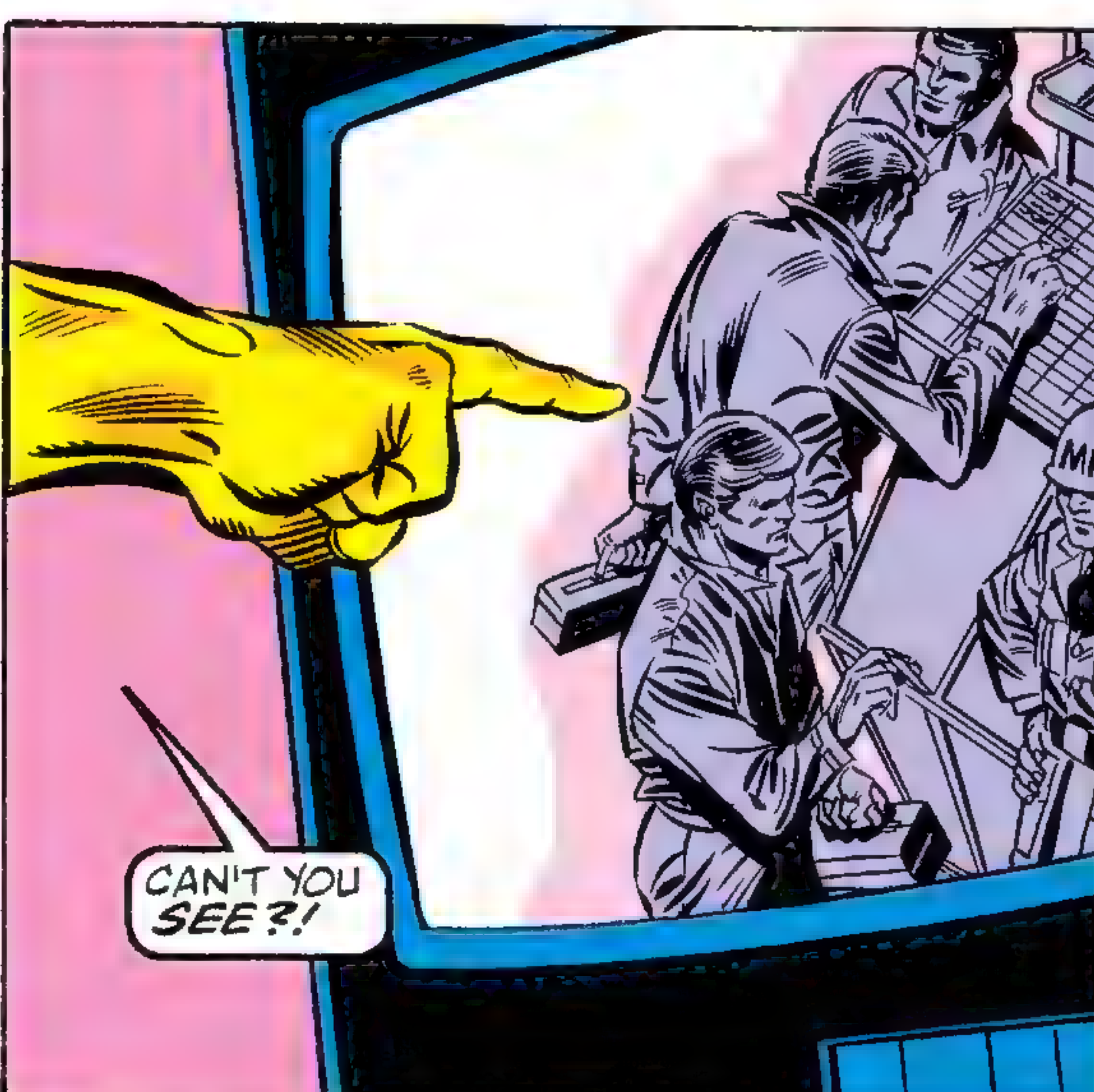
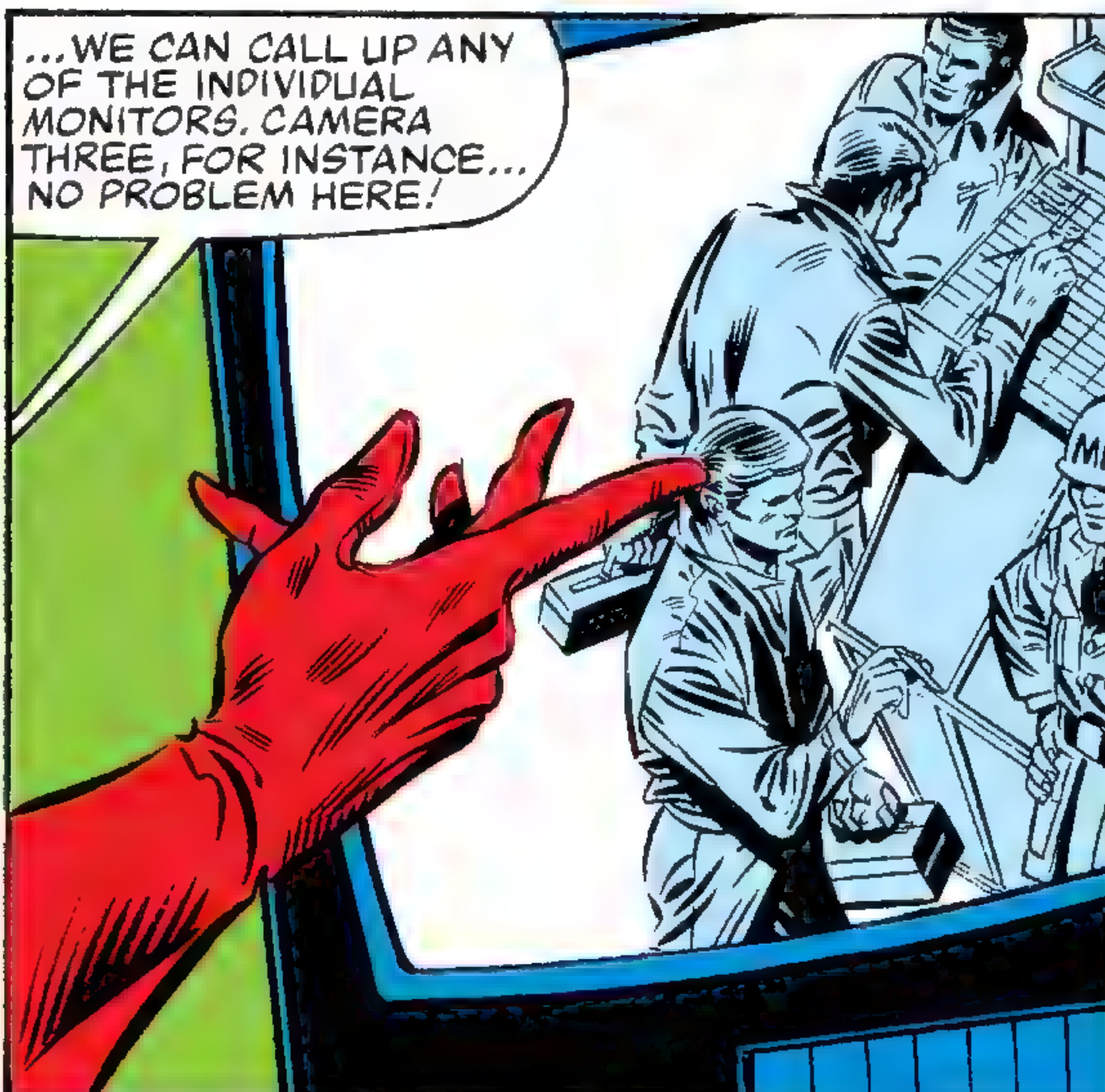
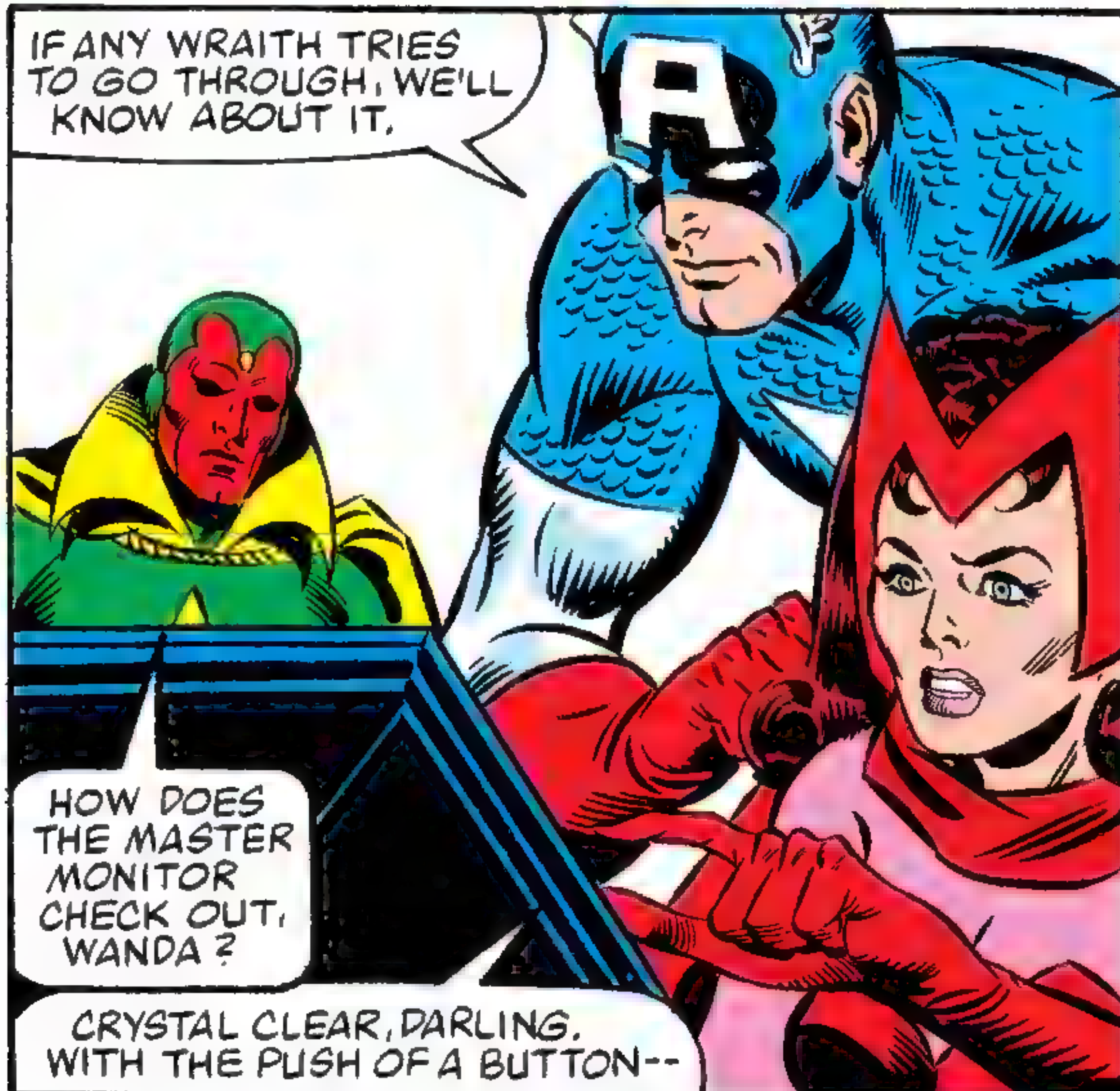
WHILE, IN THE SPACE CENTER'S SECURITY COMMAND POST...

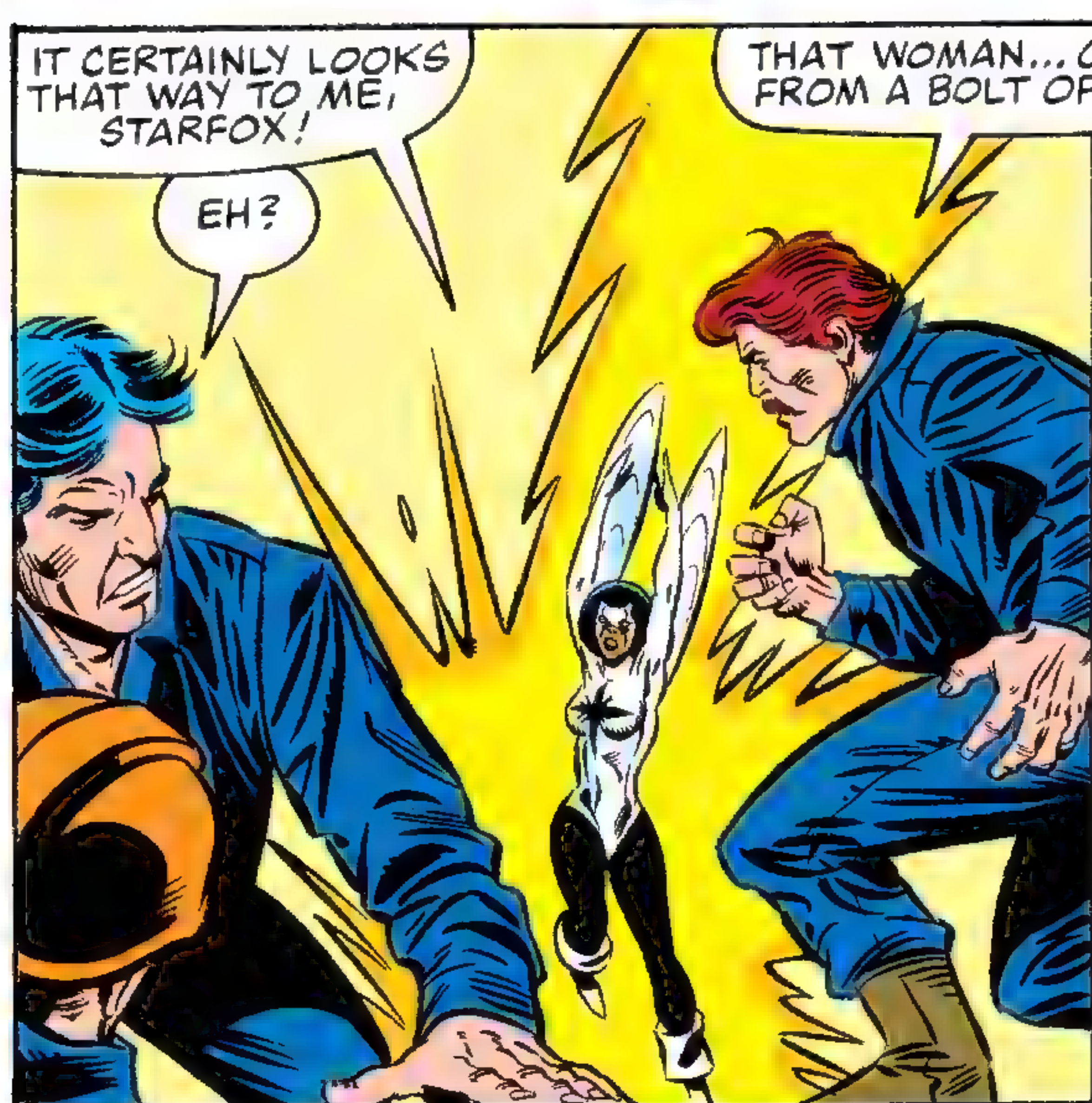
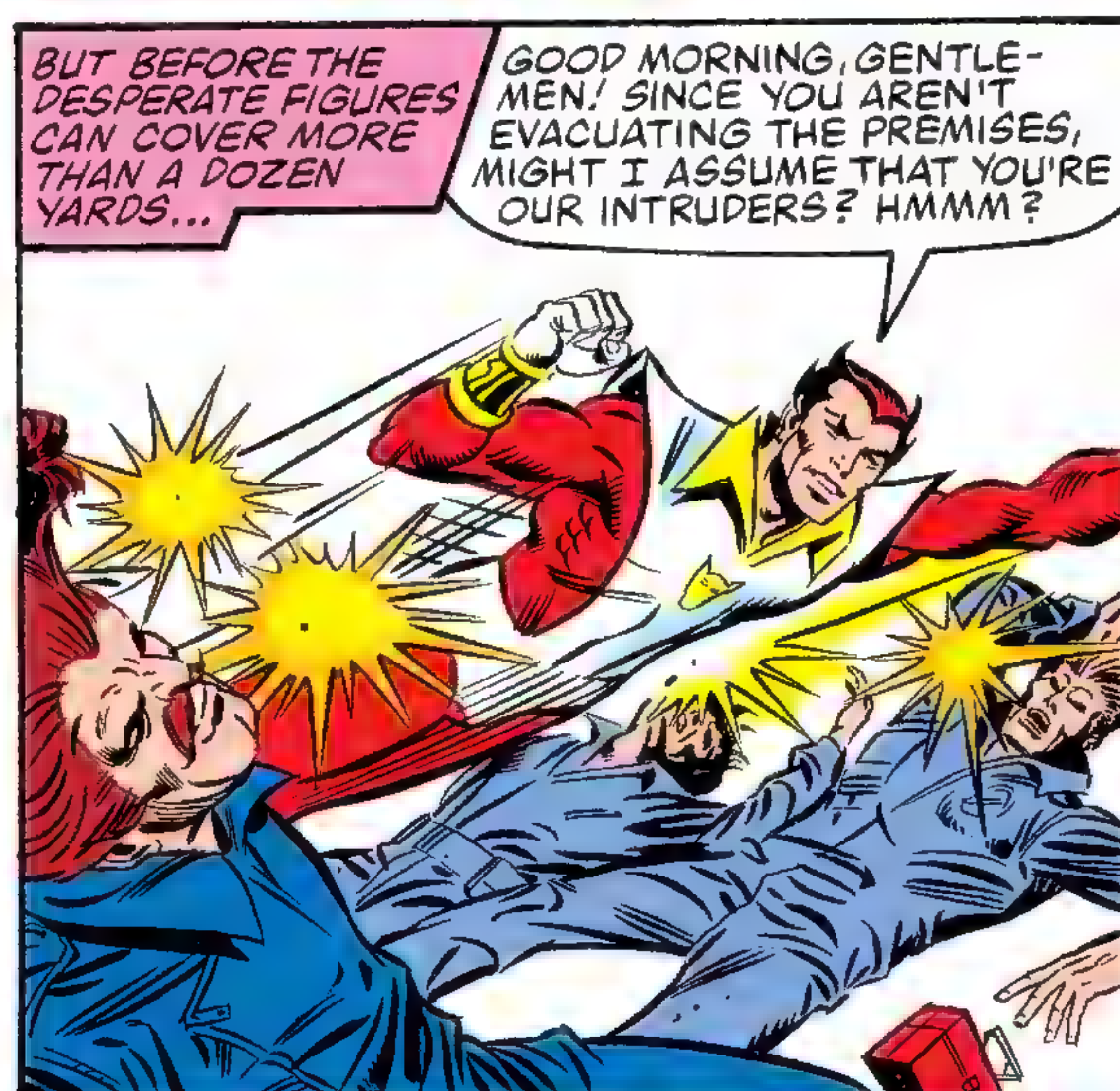
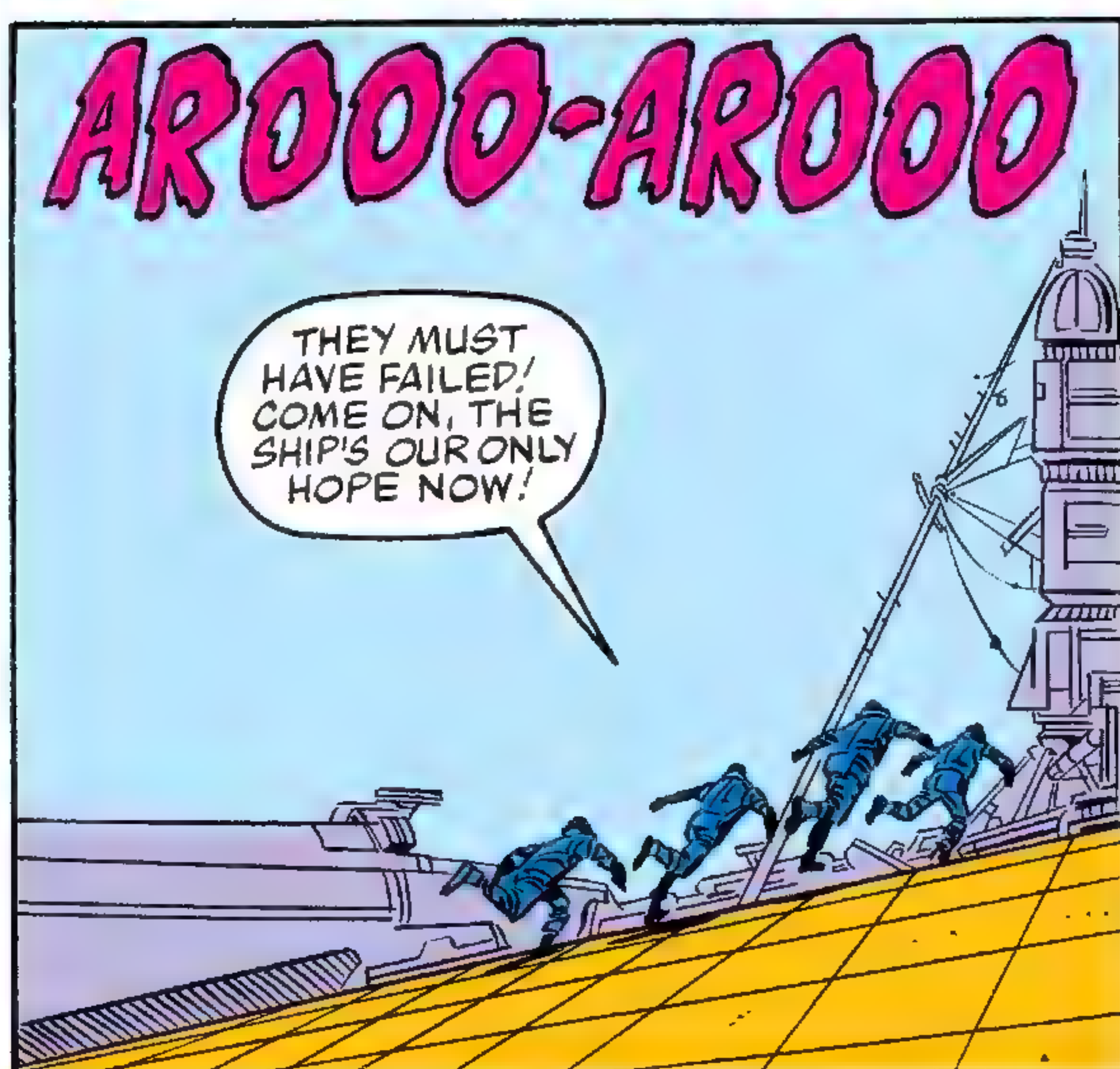
PROGRESS REPORT, CAP?

EVERYTHING TESTS OUT, VISION. THE SPECIAL OPTIC FILTERS YOU HAD ARMY ORDINANCE FABRICATE ARE PATCHED INTO SECURITY CAMERAS AT EVERY CHECKPOINT.



IF ANY WRAITH TRIES TO GO THROUGH, WE'LL KNOW ABOUT IT,







THAT'S ASSUMING A LOT!



BUT RAW POWER DOES SEEM TO BE ALL YOU UNDERSTAND!



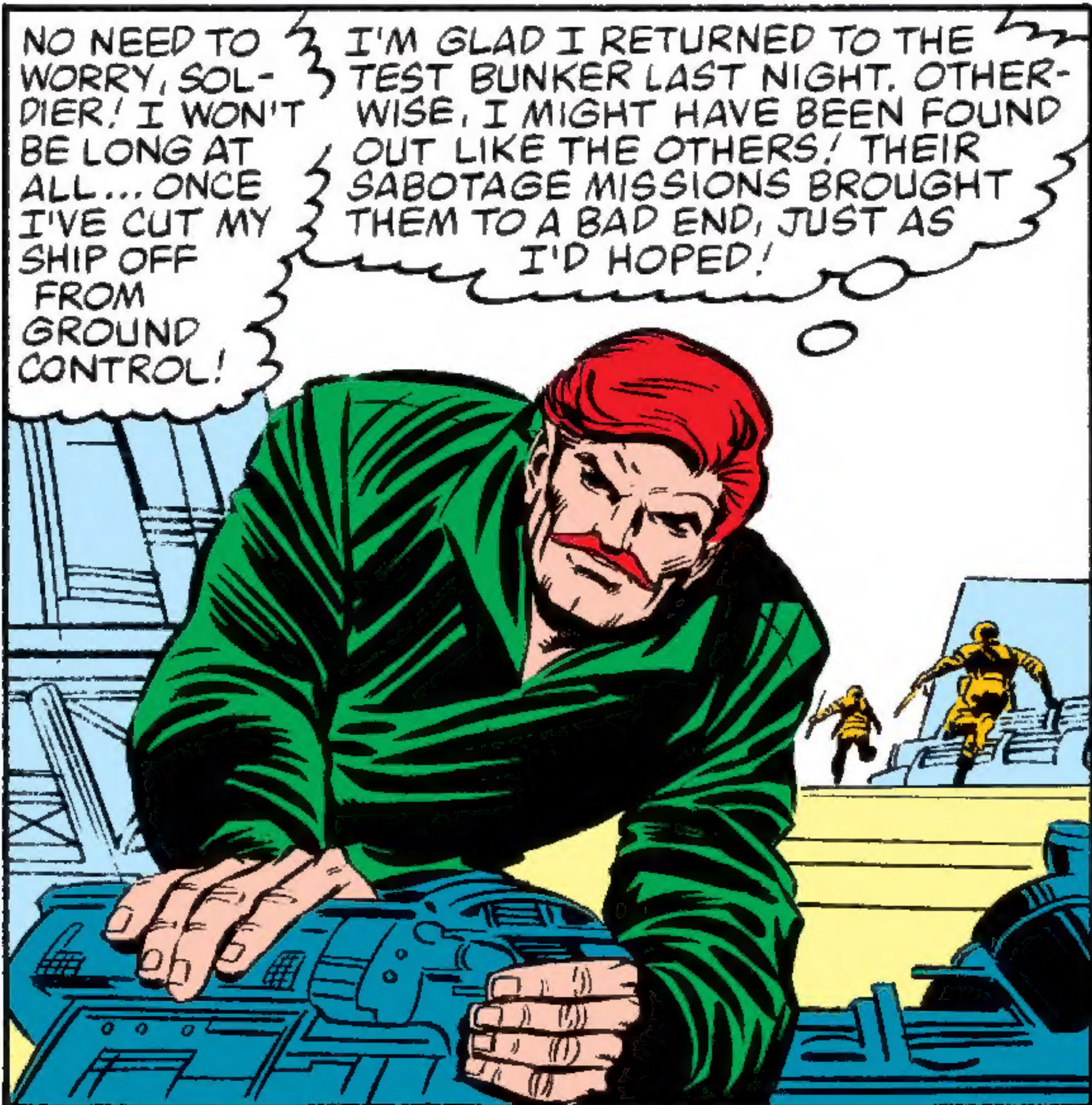
HOW SAD!



SEVERAL YARDS AWAY, AT THE BASE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL ION-DRIVE ROCKET...

WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU, SIR! WE HAVE TO EVACUATE--!

I KNOW! BUT THERE ARE VITAL PARTS ON THE ROCKET THAT I MUST SECURE! YOU BOYS GO ON AHEAD!



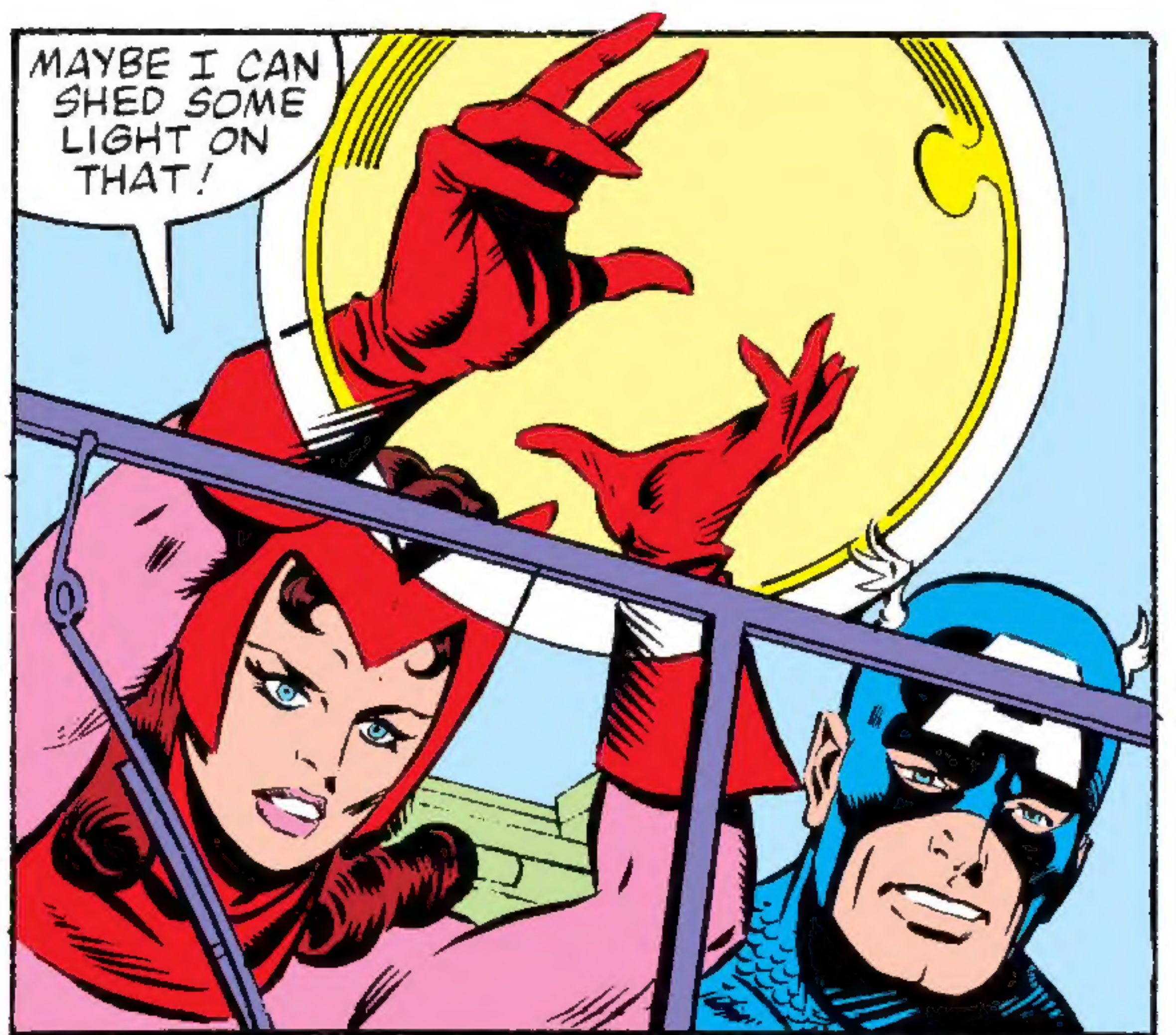
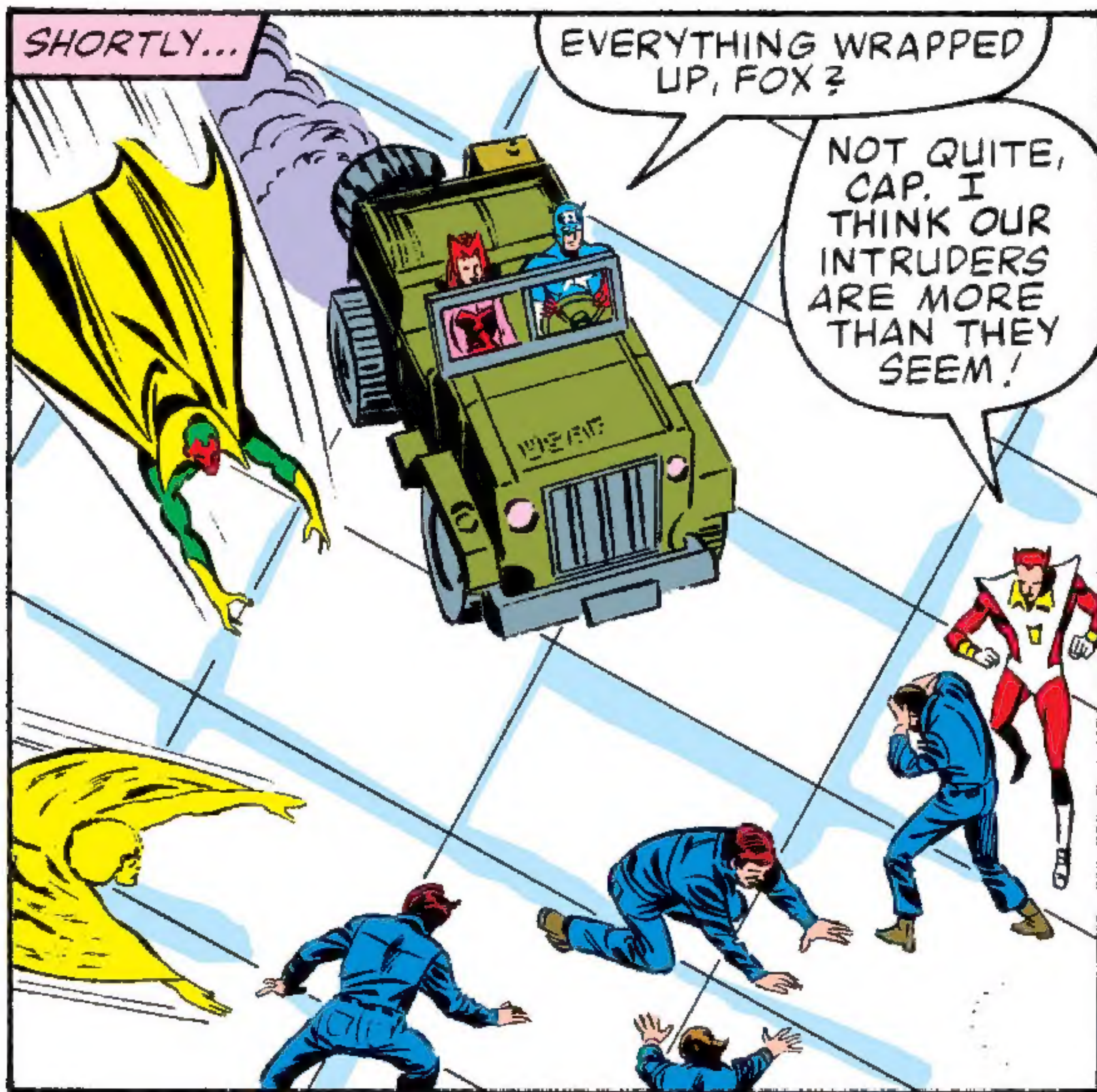
NO NEED TO WORRY, SOLDIER! I WON'T BE LONG AT ALL... ONCE I'VE CUT MY SHIP OFF FROM GROUND CONTROL!

I'M GLAD I RETURNED TO THE TEST BUNKER LAST NIGHT. OTHERWISE, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOUND OUT LIKE THE OTHERS! THEIR SABOTAGE MISSIONS BROUGHT THEM TO A BAD END, JUST AS I'D HOPED!

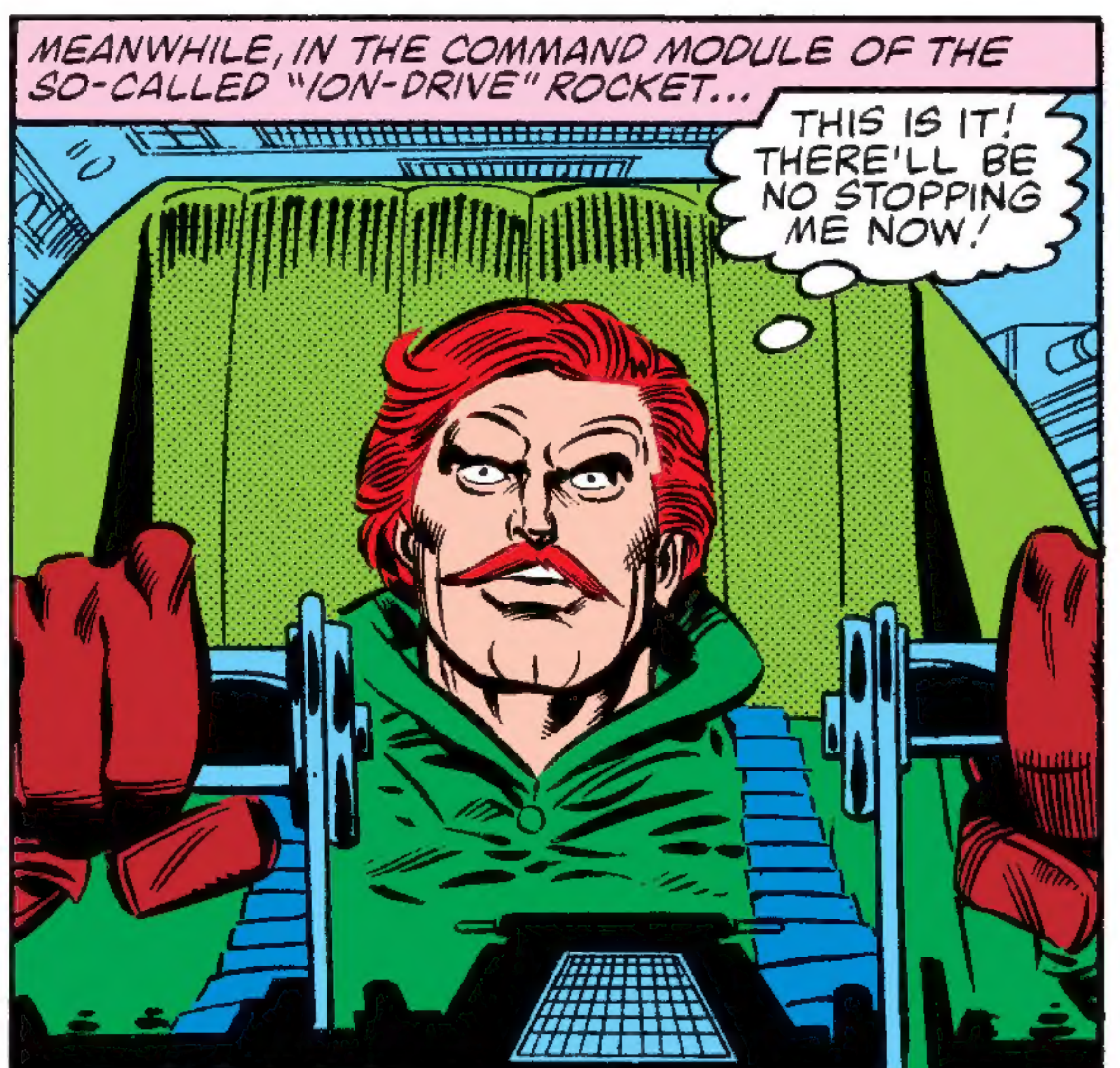
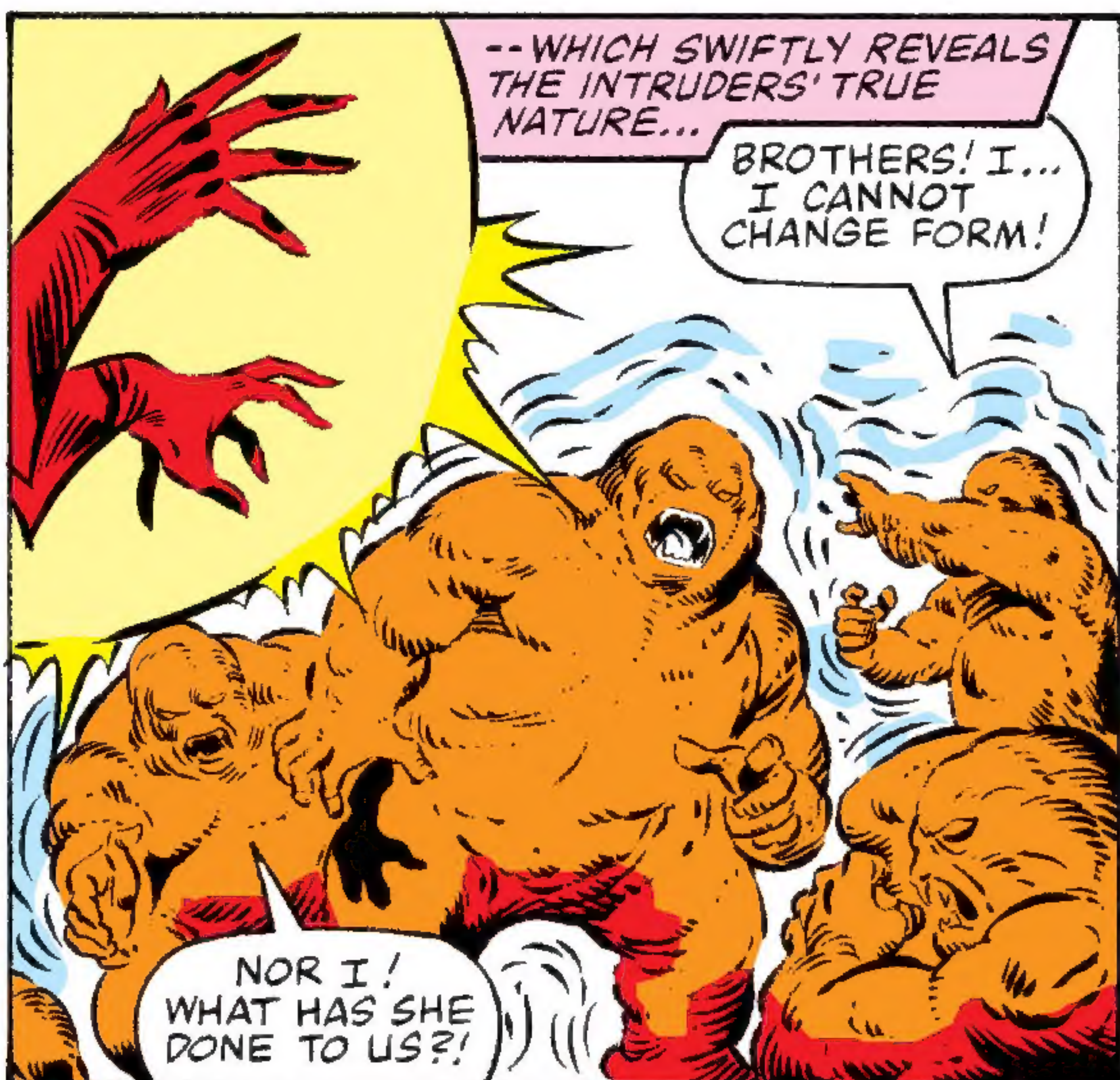


NOW, THEIR CAPTURE SHOULD BE ALL THE DIVERSION I NEED--

--TO GET AWAY SCOT FREE!



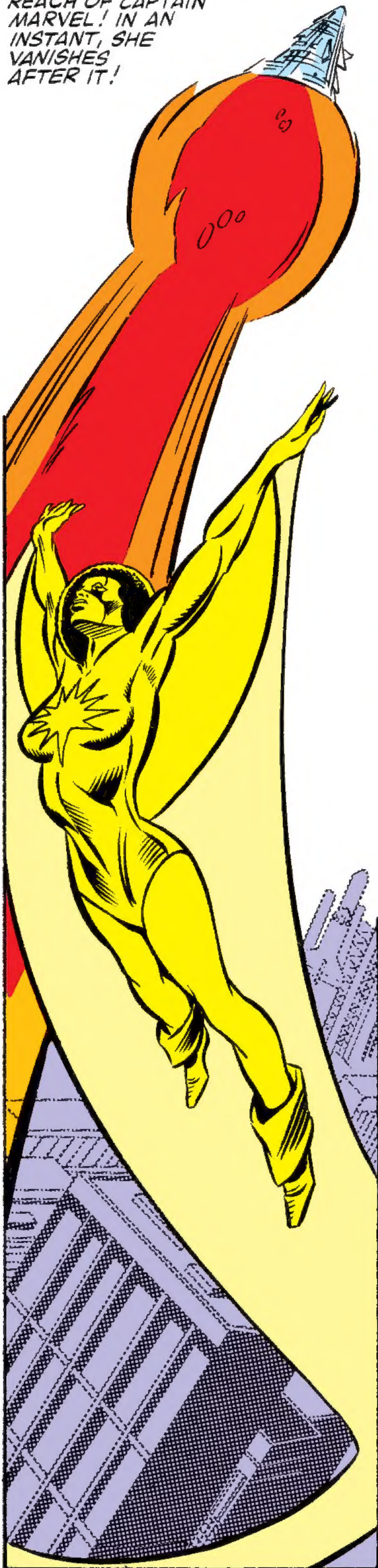
CALLING ONCE AGAIN ON HER BIZARRE MUTANT ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY, THE SCARLET WITCH FORMS A HEX SPHERE--



IN SECONDS, THE EXPERIMENTAL CRAFT IS BEYOND THE REACH OF MAN'S FASTEST SHIPS...



...BUT NOT BEYOND THE REACH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL! IN AN INSTANT, SHE VANISHES AFTER IT!



WE'VE BEEN ABANDONED ... BETRAYED!



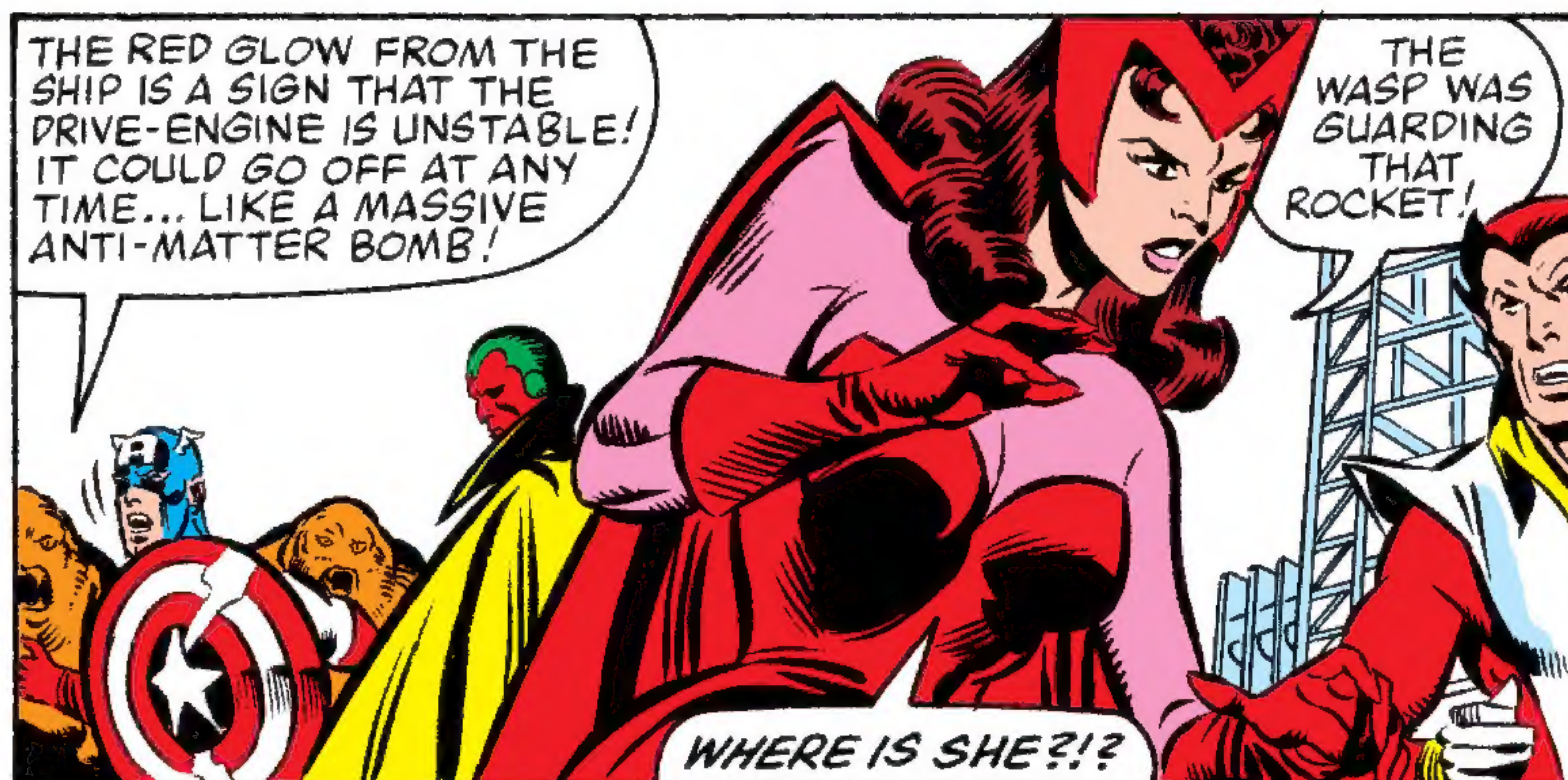
MORE THAN THAT, BROTHERS, WE HAVE BEEN DOOMED!

WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT BEING DOOMED?



CURSED HUMAN! WE HAD TO FABRICATE OUR SECRET STAR-DRIVE, USING YOUR BACKWARD TECHNOLOGY... SOMETIMES EMPLOYING CIRCUITRY STOLEN FROM OTHER PROJECTS!

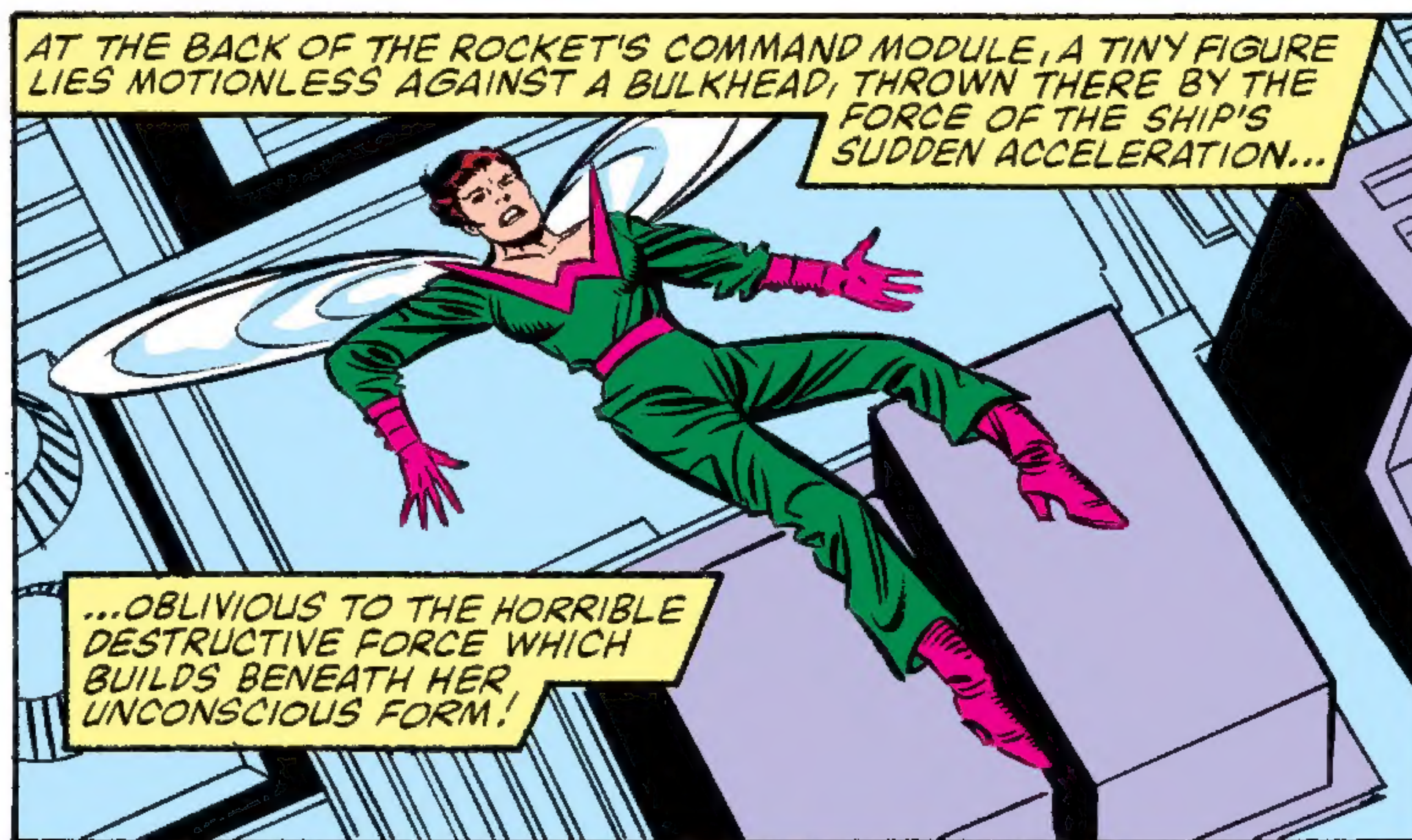
THE RED GLOW FROM THE SHIP IS A SIGN THAT THE DRIVE-ENGINE IS UNSTABLE! IT COULD GO OFF AT ANY TIME... LIKE A MASSIVE ANTI-MATTER BOMB!



THE WASP WAS GUARDING THAT ROCKET!

WHERE IS SHE?!?

AT THE BACK OF THE ROCKET'S COMMAND MODULE, A TINY FIGURE LIES MOTIONLESS AGAINST A BULKHEAD, THROWN THERE BY THE FORCE OF THE SHIP'S SUDDEN ACCELERATION...



...OBLIVIOUS TO THE HORRIBLE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE WHICH BUILDS BENEATH HER UNCONSCIOUS FORM!

NEXT ISSUE: MORE OF QUICKSILVER, HAWKEYE, AND EVERYBODY IN THE STORY WE COULD ONLY CALL...

BOMBSHELLS!

